



WEB COMIC
UNIVERSE.COM

NO 8
MAY-
JUNE

Romantic Adventures

The MAGAZINE OF YOUTH AND LOVE!

10¢

YOU WERE **MY MAN** --- I **BELIEVED**
IN YOUR LOVE --- WHILE MY
SISTER GOT YOUR KISSES!

SHE'S JEALOUS,
BILL --- BECAUSE SHE'S
A GIRL **NOBODY**
WANTS!



ROMANCE
PASSED YOU BY?
Read "**THE GIRL**
NOBODY WANTED"
-- IN THIS
ISSUE!

HAVE A SLIMMER YOUTHFUL FEMININE APPEARANCE INSTANTLY! **REDUCE**

Don't look old before your time. Do as thousands of others do, wear a comfortable new and improved **UP-LIFT ADJUST-O-BELT!** The **UP-LIFT ADJUST-O-BELT**, with the amazing new adjustable front panel, controls your figure the way you want it, with added support where you need it most. Simply adjust the laces and **PRESTO** your mid section is reshaped and your back braced and you look and feel younger!



**Your Appearance!
Look and Feel Like
Sixteen Again!**

No other girdle or supporter belt has more hold-in power! The **Up-Lift Adjust-O-Belt** is the newest, most comfortable girdle I ever had.

More Up-Lift and Hold-in Power!

The **UP-LIFT ADJUST-O-BELT** takes weight off tired feet and gives you a more alluring, more daintily feminine, curvaceous figure the instant you put it on. It gives you lovely curves just in the right places, with no unwanted bulges in the wrong ones. It whittles your waistline to nothingness, no matter what shape you may now have. It's easily adjusted — always comfortable!

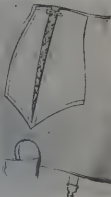
Test the ADJUST-O-BELT Up-Lift Principle with Your Own Hands!

Clasp your hands over your abdomen, press upwards and in gently but firmly. You feel better don't you! That's just what the **UP-LIFT ADJUST-O-BELT** does for you, only the **ADJUST-O-BELT** does it better. Mail Coupon and test it at home for 10 days **FREE** at our expense!

Appear Slimmer, and Feel Better!

The **UP-LIFT ADJUST-O-BELT** lifts and flattens unsightly bulges, comfortably, quickly, firmly. It readjusts easily to changes in your figure, yet no laces touch your body. It gives instant slenderizing figure control. It fashionably shapes your figure to its slimmest lines. Like magic the **UP-LIFT ADJUST-O-BELT** obeys your every wish. Pounds and inches seem to disappear instantly from waist, hips and thighs. You can adjust it to your slimmed down figure as your figure changes. It gives the same fit and comfort you get from a made to order costing 2 or 3 times the price. It washes like a dream.

Style: Panty and regular. Colors: Nude and white. It's made of the finest stretch material used in any girdle, with a pure satin front panel and made by the most skilled craftsmen. It's light in weight, but powerfully strong. It won't roll up, bulge or curl at the top. It gives extra-double support where you need it most. No other girdle at any price can give you better support, can make you look better, feel better or appear slimmer. Sizes 24 to 44 waist. Only \$3.98



You will look like and feel like this beautiful model in your new and improved Up-Lift Adjust-O-Belt.

MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE WITH A 10-DAY FREE TRIAL

If the **UP-LIFT ADJUST-O-BELT** isn't better than any supporter you ever had, if you don't feel more comfortable, if you don't look and feel younger, if your shape isn't 100% **IMPROVED**, if you are not delighted with it, return it and your money will be refunded in full.

FREE: New amazing **NYLON** laces will be sent free with your order. Try them instead of your regular laces. You may keep them **FREE** even if you return the girdle.

SEND NO MONEY

ADJUST-O-BELT CO., Dept. 270
1025 Broad St., Newark, New Jersey

Rush your new and improved **UP-LIFT ADJUST-O-BELT** for \$3.98 in size and style check.

- ☐ Regular. ☐ Panty.
☐ C.O.D. I will pay postage, plus handling.
☐ I enclose \$3.98. You pay postage, plus handling.
CHECK SIZE: ☐ Sm. (25-26). ☐ Med. (27-28).
☐ Lg. (29-30). ☐ XL (31-32). ☐ XXL (34-36).
☐ XXXL (38-40). ☐ XXXXL (42-44).

Name _____

Address _____

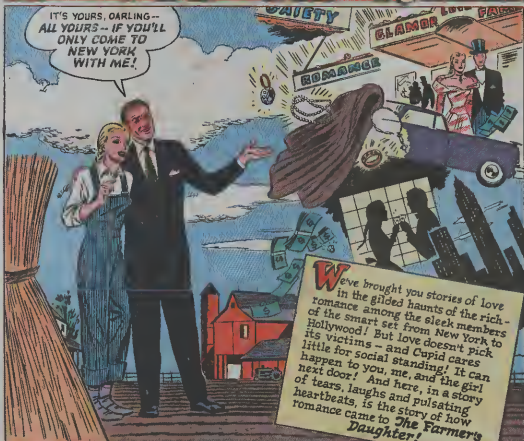
City _____

Zone _____ State _____

I understand if not delighted with the **UP-LIFT ADJUST-O-BELT**, I can return it in 10 days for full purchase price refund.

SENT ON APPROVAL!

The Farmer's Daughter



We've brought you stories of love in the gilded haunts of the rich-- romance among the sleek members of the smart set from New York to Hollywood! But love doesn't pick its victims-- and Cupid cares little for social standing! It can happen to you, me, and the girl next door! And here, in a story of tears, laughs and pulsating heartbeats, is the story of how romance came to *The Farmer's Daughter*!

Here is where our love story begins, reader-- amid scenes of quiet, rustic beauty, where pulsing life and budding romance can be found in every blade of grass, in the sweet fragrance of freshly-mown hay...



Who can resist the enchantment of rural life, or help but be bewitched by the beauties of nature?
NOBODY, you say?
Hmm... well, **ALMOST** nobody!
Here's **HAZEL NEWTON**-- what's **SHE** thinking about?

GOSH, THESE DEBYOOTANTES ARE PRETTY! IF ONLY I COULD GET OFF THIS STUPID OLD FARM AND BE LIKE **THEM!** I BET EVERY MAN IN NEW YORK WOULD BE IN LOVE WITH ME!



"Yes, that's the way I'd always been, reader—a rebel against the weary boredom of my farm chores, filled with a hungry yearning for a life of glamor, beauty, excitement...**LOVE!**"



"But the years flew by—and I grew into young womanhood with my dreams still no closer to reality! Within me was an ever-growing, smouldering resentment against everything and everyone connected with farm life!"

YORE PET COW DAISY IS GETTIN' TO BE A REAL PRIZE WINNER, HAZEL! WHEN YOU GONNA ENTER NER IN THE 4-H CONTEST?

I WOULDN'T BE SEEN DEAD AT THAT HICK COUNTY FAIR! DO YOU THINK I'M LINE **YOU**... INTERESTED ONLY IN COWS AND MILKING AND PLOWING? DON'T YOU KNOW THAT A GIRL WANTS **MORE** THAN THAT... THAT SNE CAN **HATE** BEING STUCK ON A DIRTY OLD FARM?



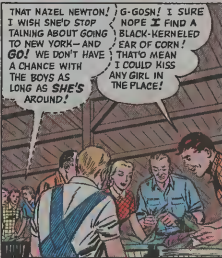
OH, OH -- SNE'S OFF AGAIN! JUST MENTION ANYTHIN' ABOUT THE FARM, AN' SNE FLIES INTO A TANTRUM! WHAT'S **WRONG** WITH YOU, HAZEL?

ON, **NOBODY** UNDERSTANDS ME AROUND HERE! I—I WON'T BE HAPPY UNTIL I'M WHERE I **BELONG**—IN A BIG CITY LIKE NEW YORK—WHERE LIFE IS **REALLY** WORTH LIVING!

"I suppose everyone **DID** think I was touched in the head—but that never prevented the local yokels from flocking around me at every chance!"

THAT NAZEL NEWTON! I WISH SNE'D STOP TALKING ABOUT GOING TO NEW YORK—AND **GO!** WE DON'T HAVE A CHANCE WITH THE BOYS AS LONG AS **SHE'S** AROUND!"

G-GOSH! I SURE **NOPE** I FIND A BLACK-KERNELED EAR OF CORN! THAT'O MEAN I COULD KISS ANY GIRL IN THE PLACE!



HEY, I FOUND ONE! "AN' I'M PICKIN' **HAZEL!**"



ON, GET AWAY FROM ME, CLEM HAWKINS—YOU **CLOD!** I CAME HERE TO HELP WITH THE NUSHING—NOT TO BE GRABBED BY LOUYS LIKE **YOU!**



AW, GOSH, HAZEL! IF I DON'T GIT TO KISS YOU, **WHO DOES?**

NONE OF YOU NICKS EVER WILL! I'LL WAIT FOR SOMEONE WHO **DOESN'T** SMELL LIKE A BARNYARD!

OKAY, HONEY, BUT REMEMBER—I **DON'T** GIVE UP **EASY!**



"How **COULD** I have eyes for any of **THEM**--
when faces like **THESE** haunted my dreams?"

MY PRINCE CHARMING --
WHAT WILL HE BE
LIKE?...



LIKE
THIS--



OR
THIS--



OR
THIS?



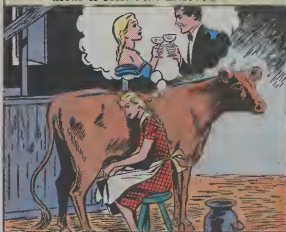
"Little
did
I know
that fate
was about
to take
a hand
in my
choice!
For,
although
I didn't
know it,
down the
road
THIS
was
happening..."

ALL RIGHT, J.C.-- YOU
WOULD HAVE TO GO
HUNTING UP ATMOS-
PHERE FOR OUR DAIRY
ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN!
IF YOU'VE ONLY HAVE
BEEN SATISFIED WITH
THE IDEAS I WAS
GIVING YOU, WE
WOULDN'T BE
STUCK OUT HERE,
A MILLION MILES
FROM NOWHERE!

HOW'D I KNOW
OUR FUEL PUMP
WOULD GO SOUR?
I **STILL** SAY
WE CAN GET
BETTER IDEAS
FOR DAIRY ADS
OUT IN THE
COUNTRY THAN
SITTING IN A PLUSH
AGENCY OFFICE! --
BUT COME ON, LET'S
LOOK FOR A
FARMHOUSE!

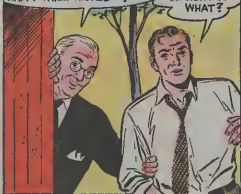


"Yes, little did I know that my fondest dreams were
about to become a **REALITY**!"



THERE'S NO ONE AROUND -- **SHH!** JUST **LOOK**
AT THAT GIRL! WHY, SHE'S THE VERY PERSONI-
FICATION OF RUSTIC HEALTH AND BEAUTY!
SHE'S PURE INNOCENCE, PURE FRESHNESS,
THINKING CONTENTEY OF HER
HAPPY FARM CHORES --!

UH-HUH! SO
WHAT?



SO WHAT? SO **THERE'S** OUR BRILLIANT IDEA
FOR THE NEW ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN! WE TAKE
THAT YOUNG FRESHNESS OF HERS TO NEW YORK,
BUILD A BIG PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN AROUND HER,
LABEL HER **MISS DAIRYMAID**, PLASTER
HER PICTURES ALL OVER THE COUNTRY -- AND
JUST SIT BACK AND WATCH SALES OF
DAIRYMADE MILK
ZOOM!

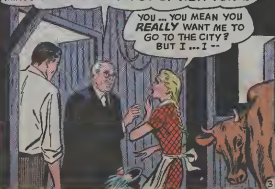
BUT WAIT,
J.C. -- WE
SHOULDN'T BE
TOO HASTY --
LET'S THINK
IT **OVER**
FIRST--!



"And a moment later, wild, fantastic words were
miraculously offering me my **DREAM OF DREAMS!**"

--YES, MY DEAR, YOU'LL BE THE MOST FAMOUS GIRL
IN THE COUNTRY! YOUR NAME WILL BE ON EVERYONE'S
LIPS, YOUR PICTURE ON EVERYONE'S BILLBOARD -- ER,
MINO! YOU'LL BE THE **TOAST OF NEW YORK!**

YOU ... YOU MEAN YOU
REALLY WANT ME TO
GO TO THE CITY?
BUT I ... I --



"I couldn't believe my ears-- this couldn't be happening to ME-- to HAZEL NEWTON, FARM GIRL!"

BUT I **TOLD** YOU ALL THE WONDERFUL THINGS THAT ARE IN STORE FOR YOU-- NIGHT CLUBS, SOCIETY LIFE, YOUR PICTURE IN THE PAPERS, **FAME!**

I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY YOU'RE SO UNWILLING!

UNWILLING?

LISTEN, NOW THAT I KNOW YOU'RE **REAL**, I WON'T LET YOU GO UNTIL YOU **PROMISE** YOU'LL TAKE ME TO NEW YORK!



HMM -- IF THIS IDEA OF J.C.'S **WORKS**, HE'LL BEGIN TO THINK HE DOESN'T NEED **MY IDEAS**-- AND I MAY LOSE THE ACCOUNT! BUT IF I CAN JUST **SABOTAGE** THE WHOLE PLAN...

SURE, WE'LL PROMISE TO PUT A PICTURE OF **YOU MILKING THAT COW** INTO EVERY NEWSPAPER, MAGAZINE AND BILLBOARD IN THE COUNTRY! AND BOY, DO PEOPLE GO FOR THAT **HICK STUFF!**

OHHH!



"Pictures of me **MILKING A COW!**

THAT wasn't my idea of **GLAMOR**-- that was what I wanted to get **AWAY** from! They just wanted to **HUMILIATE** me! Suddenly I **HATED** them for insultingly offering to make my dream come true-- and then destroying it!"

GET OUT OF HERE-- **GET OUT!** I'D **DIE** BEFORE I WENT ANYWHERE WITH YOU!

HEY--DON'T! STOP--!



YOU **RUINED** IT FOR US -- YOU HAD TO GO AND OPEN YOUR BIG MOUTH JUST WHEN I HAD NER READY TO SIGN A CONTRACT! AND IF YOU CAN'T MAKE UP FOR IT AND TALK HER INTO COMING TO NEW YORK, YOU'RE **THROUGH** WITH THE **DAIRYMADE** ACCOUNT!

ALL RIGHT, J.C., I... I GUESS I **DID** GUM UP A PRETTY SWEET IDEA! BUT I'LL SWEETEN UP TO NER -- LEAVE IT ALL TO ME! **SHE'LL BE IN NEW YORK IN A WEEK!**



"With bitterness still rankling in my heart, I somehow managed to get through the day! But, that night --"

WE GOT A BOARDER! THIS YOUNG FELLA'S STRANDED HERE, SAYS IT'LL TAKE A WEEK TO FIX HIS CAR UP -- SO HE'S STAYIN' WITH **US!** HIS NAME'S **CHESTER CALDWELL!**

YOU!



HE CAN'T STAY NERE -- **HE CAN'T!** I **WON'T LIVE** IN THE SAME HOUSE WITH HIM!

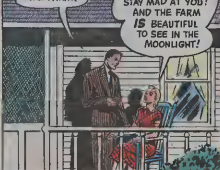
WAL, I DUNNO ABOUT **YOU** -- BUT **HE'S** STAYIN' HERE! HE'S PAVIN' US GOOD MONEY, AN' CROPS ARE KINDA BAD -- SO HUSH THAT TONGUE O' YORES, GAL!



"But, listening to his warm, friendly conversation at supper, I began to wonder why I'd distrusted him--perhaps misjudged him! And afterwards, on the porch..."

I'M SORRY IF I OFFENDED YOU BEFORE--
HAZEL! I WOULDN'T **DREAM** OF FORCING YOU TO POSE AGAINST YOUR WILL FOR PICTURES WITH A **COW!**
I... I'D CONSIDER MYSELF FORGIVEN -- IF YOU SHOWED ME AROUND THE FARM!

WELL, I... I GUESS I CAN'T STAY MAD AT YOU! AND THE FARM IS BEAUTIFUL TO SEE IN THE MOONLIGHT!



YOU KNOW, I'M **GLAD** MY CAR BROKE DOWN NEAR HERE -- IT GAVE ME A CHANCE TO MEET THE **LOVELIEST GIRL I'VE EVER SEEN!**
I... I NEVER FELT THIS WAY BEFORE, NAZEL-- NOR SAID WORDS LIKE THESE TO ANYONE --

I... I DON'T KNOW WHETHER IT'S MOON-MADNESS OR LOVE SICKNESS -- BUT HIS FACE -- LIKE THOSE I'VE DREAMED ABOUT!



"I was with Chet constantly for the rest of that week -- each day more and more entranced by his handsomeness, his winning ways! And then, on the day he was to leave, **IT HAPPENED!** I knew, at last, the tumultuous longing, the first rapture of **FIRST LOVE!**"

HAZEL...
DARLING!

OH--
CHET!



"We parted, dazed, starry-eyed..."

I... I CAN'T BELIEVE IT-- I'VE JUST FOUND YOU, JUST REALIZED HOW MUCH YOU MEAN TO ME -- AND NOW I HAVE TO LEAVE YOU!

IF ONLY THERE WERE SOMETHING WE...
WAIT!



YOU **WON'T** LEAVE ALONE -- **I'LL COME WITH YOU!**
I'VE GOT AN UNCLE IN NEW YORK -- I CAN STAY WITH HIM--AND WE'D BE TOGETHER!

IT'LL BE -- **HEAVEN!**

"Then **NEW YORK**, the city of my dreams--its pointed sky-scrappers like fingers beckoning me onward to glamor, gaitty, **ROMANCE!**"

ON, CHET -- THIS IS THE **HAPPIEST DAY** OF MY LIFE! BEING WITH **YOU -- AND HERE--** IT'S LIKE BEING IN TWO PARADISES AT ONCE!

YOU **BELONG** HERE, DARLING -- BEAUTY LIKE YOURS WILL TAKE NEW YORK BY STORM!



"The days slipped by in a whirlwind of joyous excitement! Chet initiated me into society life-- into a whole new world of intriguing enchantment and exhilarating delight!"



"And then that evening of throbbing romance, his arms strong about me, his lips searing mine! That was MEANT to be! I was his, he mine-- and Ours, I knew, was a romance that could NEVER die!"

SWEETHEART-- I LOVE YOU!

DARLING!



YOU - YOU'VE MADE ME TRULY HAPPY, HAZEL -- SO MUCH SO THAT THE FAILURE OF MY CAREER SEEMS UNIMPORTANT! I DON'T REALLY CARE NOW THAT J.C. IS TOSsing ME OFF THAT DAIRYMADE ACCOUNT BECAUSE I COULDN'T FIND ANYONE TO TAKE YOUR PLACE IN THOSE PUBLICITY PHOTOS! I WOULDN'T THINK OF ASKING YOU, KNOWING HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT IT!

OH, BUT... BUT YOUR CAREER IS IMPORTANT!



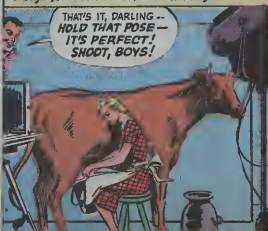
"Suddenly I knew what I had to do! If Chet loved me enough to give up his career for my sake, then surely I could sacrifice my petty vanity on his behalf!"

DARLING, I'LL POSE FOR THOSE PICTURES! I'LL DO ANYTHING YOU SAY -- MILK THOSE COWS, EVEN EAT HAY MYSELF -- AS LONG AS IT'LL MAKE YOU A SUCCESS AT YOUR JOB!



"The look of adoration on his face was payment enough for me! And so, the next day--"

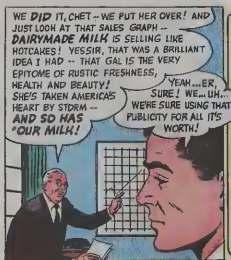
THAT'S IT, DARLING-- HOLD THAT POSE-- IT'S PERFECT! SHOOT, BOYS!



"Within a matter of weeks, my photographs seemed to sprout in every magazine, newspaper, billboard, and newsreel in the country! Almost overnight, my name became a byword!"



Miss Dairymaid brings you Dairymade Milk!

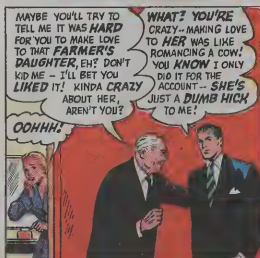


"As for me, life was ecstasy--and only marriage could have made me happier! But I had no time to wonder why Chet didn't propose! I was scheduled for a series of personal appearances--one of them in Radio City's giant theatre!"

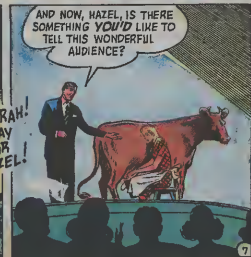
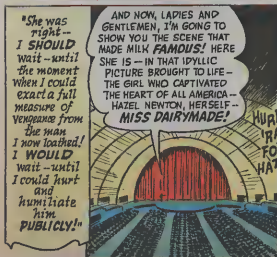


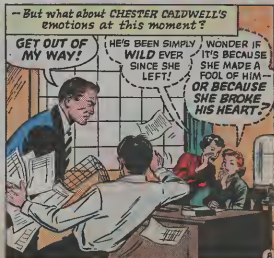
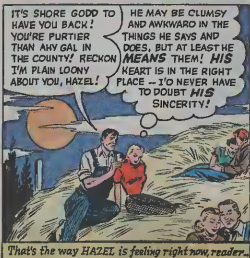
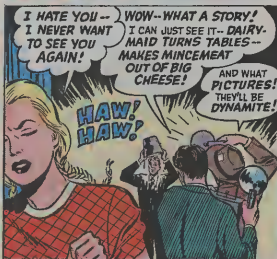
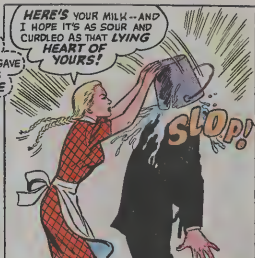
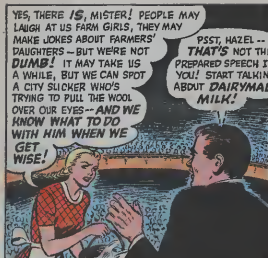
NO, I HAVE TO LOOK FRESH AND RUSTIC -- **DOOPS!** BE CAREFUL, THESE DRESSING-ROOM PARTITIONS ARE **FLIMSY!**

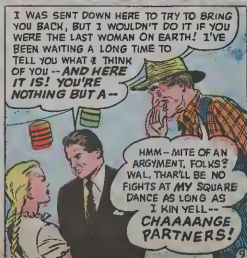
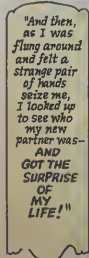
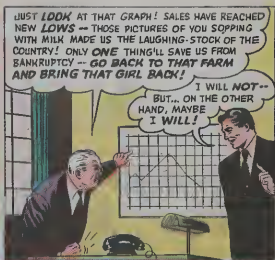
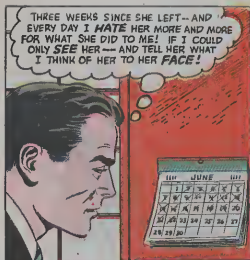
BUCK UP, CHET--HOW CAN YOU BE SO GLUM WHEN WE'LL SOON HAVE THE **COWS** DRINKING MILK?



"Cruel, bitter words--and they tore at my bleeding heart like a thousand knives! Then came wild, uncontrollable fury--hunger for **REVENGE** on the man who had destroyed my love... **MY LIFE!**"

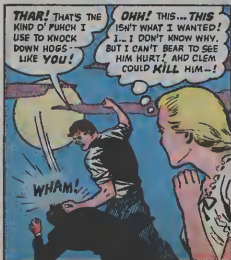






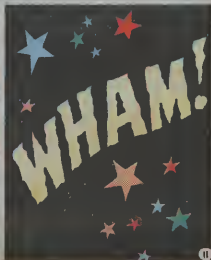
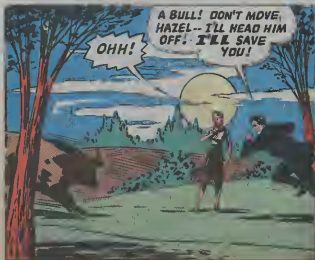
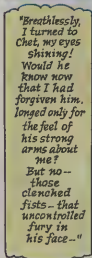
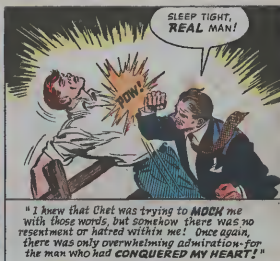


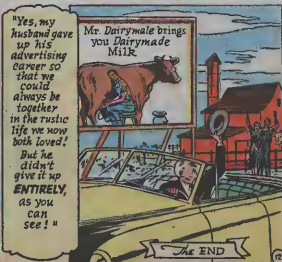
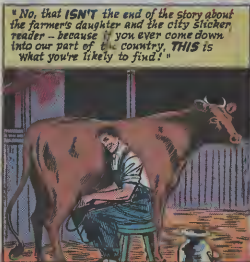
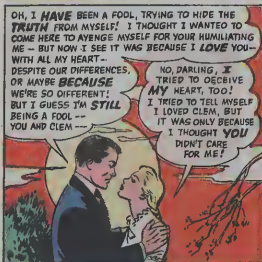
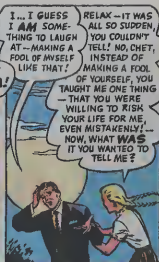
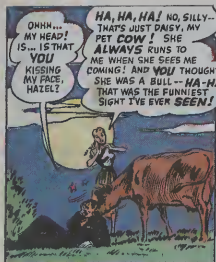
"By now, I'd had time to think -- to realize that once again, I had a superb opportunity to **HURT** him, to exact my **LAST ONCE OF REVENGE!**"



"It was strange, but I suddenly felt as if I'd lost something dear and cherished as I saw Chet go down under Clem's bludgeoning fist! But now he was up, fighting like an enraged demon -- and strange, tingling emotions gripped me!"







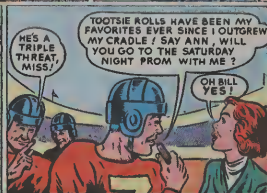
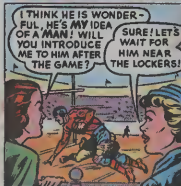
Tootsie

SCORES
A ROMANTIC
TOUCHDOWN

By BILL SCHREIBER

DID YOU SEE THAT
PASS! ISN'T HE
TERRIFIC!

THAT'S BILL TAYLOR!
HE SITS NEXT TO ME
IN CHEMISTRY CLASS!



The LOVE GAME

ALICE BOLTON had never been so unhappy as the day she won the National Singles Tennis Championship. Here she was, tennis champ at the tender age of twenty, after a meteoric rise through the ranks in which she had beaten the best players in the country—and yet she was *lonely*!

Of course, it was easy to see why. Since Alice had concentrated on tennis throughout her teens, the only men she ever met were tennis players—and what man enjoyed seeing a mere snip of a girl beat him at his own game? No man who'd lost his self-esteem by losing to her would ever ask her for a date or a dance, and that was why she had now desperately decided to come to this country club under an assumed name, hoping that no one would recognize her, praying that here she'd meet the man of her dreams!

And she *had* met him—in the person of Roland Maxwell. He'd seemed interested in her, had taken her dancing, horseback riding and golfing, and then, horror of horrors, he'd asked her to play tennis with him.

At first she thought of refusing, but she knew how he'd hurt by that. And then she knew what she'd have to do—she'd have to play poorly and lose to him!

She knew she could beat him love-game after love-game, without letting him score a point—but she didn't *dare* do that and risk losing him forever! So on the day of the tennis game, she

double-faulted, missed easy lobbs, hit the ball out of bounds, and let Roland win the first game from her with very little effort on his part.

"Love-game to Mr. Maxwell," the score-keeper called out.

Alice's heart soared as she saw the grin on Roland's face when he came up to her. It had *worked*—he wouldn't flee from her now as all the others whom she'd beaten had done.

"That was more of a love-game than the score-keeper thought," Roland said. "But it *won't* be if you don't play the hardest game of your life in the next set, young lady! And I'll know if you're *purposely* trying to lose—so let's go!"

With sinking heart, Alice went onto the court for the next game. She didn't dare fool him now—she'd *have* to play her best game!

But her best game proved to be not good enough—for Roland suddenly became a tennis terror, serving vicious aces and running her ragged, without letting her score a point!

"Love-game to Mr. Maxwell," the score-keeper intoned.

"This *was* a game of love," Roland said as he came up to the panting, bewildered Alice. "You see, I knew who you were—*Champ!* I'd seen your pictures in the papers—but you didn't know that I'm tennis champ of Australia! What do you say to making it *Mr. and Mrs. Champ, darling?*"

Alice answered him with her lips, in a kiss that was more eloquent than any words could be.

The GIRL NOBODY WANTED



WHAT HAPPENS TO A GIRL WHO FEELS THAT ROMANCE HAS PASSED HER BY AFTER HER DEEPEST YEARNINGS HAVE LED HER TO NOTHING BUT HUMILIATION AND HEARTBREAK? CAROL HUNTER FOUND HER ANSWER THE HARD WAY --- WHEN DISASTER SENT HER GROPING TOWARD THE MAN SHE LOVED!

"THE DAY I'LL ALWAYS REMEMBER STARTED JUST LIKE ANY OTHER... THE SAME BUS, THE SAME TIME, THE SAME DEPARTMENT STORE COUNTER THAT HAD FILLED MY LIFE FOR THE PAST TWO YEARS!"

"NOTHING LIKE AN HOUR'S STANDING TO MAKE ME ENVIOUS OF MY OWN SISTER... ESPECIALLY WHEN ARLENE'S A MODEL WHO'S CHARMING ENOUGH TO RIDE AROUND IN HER CLIENTS' CARS! WELL... SHE'S ALWAYS HAD THE ADVANTAGES... INCLUDING MANY THAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN MINE!"

"I COULDN'T HELP RECALLING A TYPICAL EXAMPLE... IT WAS MY GRADUATION PARTY... BUT ARLENE WORE THE NEW DRESS... AND ARLENE WAS THE ONE WHO CAPTIVATED MY FIRST DATE!"

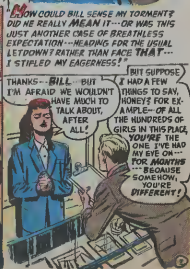
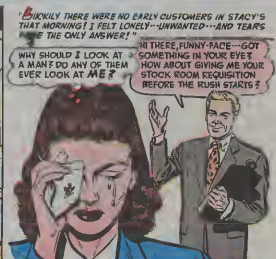
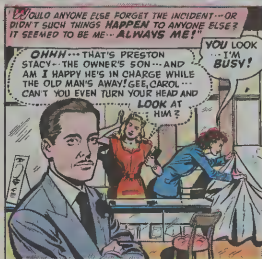
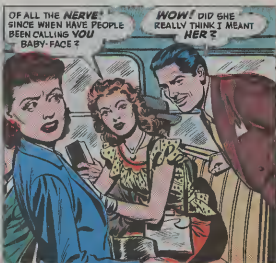
"MY CONSCIENCE TELLS ME I SHOULD BE SPENDING MORE TIME WITH CAROL, BABY... BUT I CAN'T TEAR MY EYES AWAY FROM YOU!"

"OH... DON'T WORRY ABOUT HER CHUCK! SHE SPENDS SO MUCH TIME ALONE IT'S PRACTICALLY A HABIT!"

"IT HAD BEEN GOING ON SINCE CHILDHOOD... BUT TO HAVE IT HAPPEN AGAIN, ON A NIGHT THAT MEANT SO MUCH TO ME... THAT CAME CLOSE TO MAKING ME A STRANGER TO ROMANCE... FOREVER!"

"ALL RIGHT... I WILL MAKE A HABIT OF BEING ALONE! ARLENE CAN HAVE THE DRESSES AND THE PARTIES AND THE BOY FRIENDS... SHE CAN HAVE THEM ALL!"





"FOR JUST A MOMENT, HIS HAND RESTED ON MINE---FILLING ME WITH A SURGE THAT SWEEPED AWAY MY DOUBTS!"

GIVE ME A BREAK, CAROL! HOW ABOUT IT?

ALL RIGHT! MAYBE--- IT'LL BE A BREAK FOR BOTH OF US!



"BILL HAD ALWAYS SEEMED BREEZY AND OVER-CONFIDENT, THE FEW TIMES I'D NOTICED HIM--- BUT THAT NIGHT--- I LEARNED HOW MUCH I HAD OVERLOOKED!"

I WON'T BE STUCK IN A STOCK ROOM FOREVER, CAROL. I'VE BEEN STUDYING DEPARTMENT STORE MANAGEMENT! AFTER OLD MAN STACY GETS BACK FROM HIS VACATION, IT'S JUST A QUESTION OF TIME BEFORE HE REALIZES I RATE A BETTER JOB! GOSH--- I KNOW I'VE BEEN GABBING ON AND ON ABOUT MYSELF BUT HONEY, YOU FLOOR ME! I CAN'T THINK OF ANYTHING ELSE TO TALK ABOUT!

THEN WHY TRY?



FUNNY---THAT'S JUST WHAT I WAS THINKING!



"I COULD HARDLY BELIEVE THIS WAS HAPPENING TO ME---BUT IT WAS MY HEART THAT POUNDED---AND MY HEAD THAT RESTED ON BILL'S SHOULDER!"

I DON'T WANT TO WIND UP THE EVENING BY BRINGING UP ANYTHING TOUCHY, CAROL--- BUT WHAT'S THAT PROBLEM YOU MENTIONED?

NOTHING--- HONESTLY! I'VE COMPLETELY FORGOTTEN IT, BILL!



"CAN YOU GUESS WHAT THAT MEANT---MEETING A MAN WHO ACCEPTED ME AS I WAS? A MONTH LATER, I WAS STILL DAZZLED---AS IF SEEING SUNLIGHT FOR THE FIRST TIME!"

YEP---YOU'RE DIFFERENT IN A LOT OF WAYS---AND I THINK YOUR CLOTHES JUST ABOUT SUM IT UP! THAT IS---MOST GIRLS I'VE MET DRESS AS IF THEY'RE SETTING A MAN TRAP!

ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY YOU FEEL---SAFE AROUND ME, BILL?



BABY---YOU KNOW THE WAY I FEEL! MAYBE YOU HAVEN'T SET A TRAP---BUT YOU'VE SURE GOT ME CAUGHT!

BILL--- MAYBE YOU'VE SAID ENOUGH!



"IT ALL SOUNDED FAR AWAY---THE WIND STIRRING IN THE TREE TOPS---THE RUSTLE OF WINGS IN THE SUNLIGHT---AND BILL'S SOFTLY HUSKY VOICE!"

YOU TELL ME---BECAUSE I WON'T SAY I LOVE YOU UNLESS YOU WANT ME TO---FOR KEEPS!

SAY IT, BILL! DARLING---SAY IT OVER AND OVER!



"YES, I CHANGED DURING THOSE
GLOWING WEEKS...EVEN TOWARD
ARLENE...AND EVEN ARLENE
NOTICED IT!"

SURE I'M SEEING BILL
AGAIN TONIGHT! WHAT'S
SO STRANGE ABOUT
THAT...AREN'T YOU
DATING SANDY?

SURE...BUT
JUDGING
FROM WHAT'S
COME OVER
YOU LATELY...
HE ISN'T THE
MIRACLE MAN
BILL IS!

"KNOWING ARLENE AS I DID, AN UGLY
SHADOW OF DOUBT FLICKERED ACROSS
MY MIND...BUT I THRUST IT ASIDE!"

SAY...WHY NOT A
DOUBLE DATE...
SO EVERYONE
CAN GET
ACQUAINTED?

THAT'S RIGHT...
WHY NOT I...I
GUESS I SHOULD
HAVE THOUGHT OF
IT SOONER!

"THAT NIGHT...
SO THAT'S YOUR
KID SISTER! CUTE
LITTLE CLOTHES HORSE
...ISN'T SHE?"

BILL...I'M LANGUISH-
ING! CAN'T YOU TWO
SAVE THAT
STUFF...UNTIL
WE REACH THE
TALLYHO CLUB?

THE TALLYHO CLUB!
HEAVENS ARLENE...I'M
JUST NOT DRESSED
FOR A PLACE LIKE
THAT!

THAT SHOULDN'T
STOP US, DARLING...
YOU NEVER ARE!

"I COULD SENSE THAT THE EVENING WAS OFF TO A
BAD START FOR ME...AND THAT IT WOULD GO FROM
BAD TO WORSE! AS WE ENTERED THE TALLYHO, I FELT
EVERYONE WAS COMPARING ME TO ARLENE...EVERYONE
BUT BILL!"

RELAX, BABY...
TRY TO HAVE
FUN!

I ALWAYS DO,
DARLING...WITH
YOU!

"IT DIDN'T TAKE ME LONGS TO FIGURE WHAT WAS PASS-
ING THROUGH ARLENE'S MIND...AS SHE GLANCED GUARD-
EDLY FROM BILL TO SANDY!"

NOW SHE'S MAKING COMPARISONS...AND I CAN
SEE JUST WHAT THE DRIFT IS! SANDY'S A NICE
KID...BUT JUST THAT...AROUND A FELLOW
LIKE BILL! FOR THE FIRST TIME, I'VE GOT
SOMETHING BETTER...AND IT BOTNERS
HER!

"AND IT BOTNERS ME...UNTIL, A MOMENT LATER..."

SNAP OUT OF IT, HONEY! THE BEST
RUMBA ORCHESTRA THIS SIDE OF
CUBA IS GOING FULL BLAST...AND
YOU'RE A THOUSAND MILES
AWAY!

CAROL WASN'T HAD
MUCH OPPORTUN-
ITY TO LEARN
TO RUMBA...BUT
MAYBE SHE'LL TAKE
LESSONS! WANT A
PARTNER, BILL?

"YES, SANDY WAS A NICE KID... TOO NICE TO NOTICE THAT AFTER BILL AND ARLENE HAD HAD THE NEXT THREE DANCES TOGETHER..."

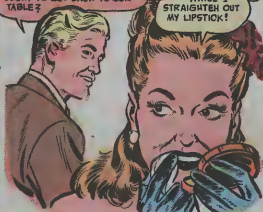
THEY'RE GOING OUT TO THE TERRACE! JUST WHAT IS SHE UP TO, ANYWAY?

...SO THAT'S THE STORY! IF I PLUG AWAY AT BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, I'LL BE OUT OF COLLEGE IN A YEAR AND A HALF--AND THEN I'LL GO PLACES LIKE A TURBO-JET!



YOU CAN SURE DO A TERRIFIC RUMBA, ARLENE--BUT IT'S A FUNNY THING --I HAVEN'T REALLY MISSED DANCING SINCE I MET CAROL! THINK WE OUGHT TO GET BACK TO OUR TABLE?

THAT'S WHERE YOU WANT TO BE--ISN'T IT? JUST A SECOND WHILE I STRAIGHTEN OUT MY LIPSTICK!



OOON, WAIT... YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING ON YOUR FACE!

HONEST? MAYBE WHAT I NEED IS SOAP AND WATER!

"ALL THIS, I COULD HAVE KNOWN IF I HAD STEPPED OUT TO THE TERRACE SIXTY SECONDS EARLIER--BUT NOW I STARED WITH DAZED DISBELIEF AS I HEARD ARLENE SAY..."

IT'S JUST A LITTLE SMUDGE! HOLD STILL--I CAN GET IT OFF WITHOUT CAROL AND SANDY EVEN KNOWING IT WAS THERE!

OH!

JUST A LITTLE SMUDGE, IS IT? WELL--MY OPINION OF YOU HAS A BIG ONE, BILL THOMPSON--BECAUSE YOU'RE NOTHING BUT A CHEAP PLAYBOY!

BABY--BE YOURSELF! YOU CAN'T BE JEALOUS OF A FEW DANCES WITH YOUR OWN SISTER!



YOU CAN DROP THE ACT, BILL--IT'S A PRETTY CORNY ONE, WITH LIPSTICK ON YOUR FACE! YOU'VE SPENT ALL THESE WEEKS TRYING TO GET A RISE OUT OF ME STRICTLY FOR LAUGHS--AND TONIGHT'S THE PAYOFF! YOU WEREN'T SATISFIED DRAGGING ME HERE, WHERE I'D FEEL OUT OF PLACE! NO--YOU HAD TO MAKE SURE I'D FEEL THE KNIFE TWISTING--BY DOING THIS!



WAIT! YOU'RE WAY OFF THE BEAM, CAROL--AND I CAN'T UNDERSTAND IT!

I CAN! WHY SHOULD CAROL BE JEALOUS--JUST LOOK AT HER! ALL SHE WANTS IS A FEW BITTER MEMORIES SHE CAN SETTLE DOWN WITH--WHEN SHE'S AN OLD MAID!



"NEVER BEFORE HAD WORDS CUT SO DEEP... NEVER BEFORE HAD I FELT THE BLINDING IMPULSE TO FIGHT BACK... EVEN NOW, WITH THE CRUSHING CONVICTION THAT IT WAS TOO LATE!"

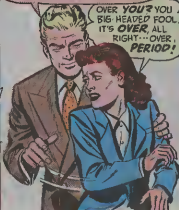
"YOU CAN JEER ABOUT MY BITTER MEMORIES... YOU... WHO WERE AT THE BOTTOM OF EVERY ONE OF THEM!"

OH!



LET'S COOL OFF, HONEY! I **THOUGHT** I HAD THE RIGHT SLANT ON YOU... BUT I NEVER DREAMED YOU'D FLARE UP LIKE **THIS**... OVER **ME**, ANYWAY!

OVER **YOU**? YOU BIG-HEADED FOOL, IT'S **OVER**, ALL RIGHT... OVER, **PERIOD!**



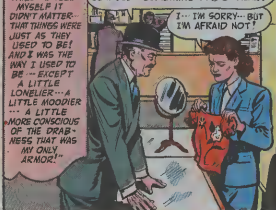
GUESS **THAT'S** PLAIN ENOUGH! AND NOW THAT I'VE HAD A BETTER LOOK... SO ARE **YOU!**



I'D LOST BILL... AND I TRIED TO TELL MYSELF IT DIDN'T MATTER... THAT THINGS WERE JUST AS THEY USED TO BE! AND I USED TO BE... EXCEPT A LITTLE LONELIER... A LITTLE MOODIER... A LITTLE MORE CONSCIOUS OF THE DRABNESS THAT WAS MY ONLY ARMOR!"

NO... I'M AFRAID THIS IS A LITTLE YOUNG-LOOKING FOR MY WIFE, MISS! BUT MAYBE **YOU** CAN PICK OUT SOMETHING SUITABLE... SOMETHING **YOU'D** WEAR!

I... I'M SORRY... BUT I'M AFRAID NOT!



SOMETHING I'D WEAR... SOMETHING NOT TOO YOUNG-LOOKING! BUT WASN'T THAT THE COURSE I'D CHOSEN? DID IT **MATTER** IF I WATCHED MY YOUTH WITHERING... IF I **DIDN'T** WANT TO BE ATTRACTIVE TO MEN... AS LONG AS IT SAVED ME FROM FURTHER HEARTBREAK... AS LONG AS IT PULLED THE PANG OF REMEMBERING?"

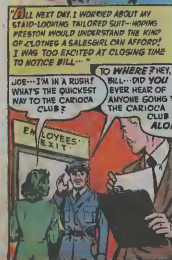
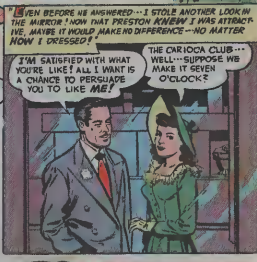


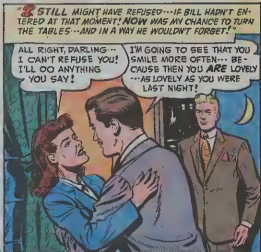
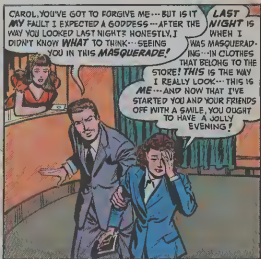
BUT SOMETHING IN ME REBELLED... SOMETHING I COULDN'T FIGHT DOWN! HERE I WAS, RESIGNING MYSELF TO BROODING LONELINESS... AND I HADN'T EVEN REACHED MY MID-TWENTIES! NO... I WOULDN'T RISK **NEW** DISAPPOINTMENT BY SEEKING LOVE AGAIN! BUT AT LEAST ONCE, I WAS GOING TO SEE HOW I **COULD** LOOK... JUST TO PROVE MY PLAINNESS WAS A MATTER OF CHOICE! THAT NIGHT... I STAYED IN THE STORE AT CLOSING TIME..."

"BILL AROUND ME WERE THE THINGS I HAD ALWAYS SHRUGGED OFF... BUT NOW, ALONE IN THE HALF-DARKNESS... I **KNEW** I HAD BEEN DECEIVING MYSELF!"

OH, THEY'RE BEAUTIFUL--AND THAT'S THE WAY **I'D** BE... IF I HAD THINGS LIKE **THESE** TO WEAR! NO ONE WILL KNOW THE DIFFERENCE IF I PICK A COMPLETE WARDROBE... **JUST TO TRY ON!**







THERE'S JUST ONE MORE PROOF OF WHAT A HEEL BILL THOMPSON IS... BUT IF YOU WANT TO DO ME A FAVOR, PRESTON... **DON'T FIRE HIM!** I'VE GOT REASONS FOR WANTING HIM AROUND!

THAT'S O.K. WITH ME! DIDN'T I SAY YOU'D GET WHAT YOU WANT?

I FOUND MY ENTIRE LIFE CHANGING DURING THE NEXT FEW MONTHS! NOW I DID HAVE THE CLOTHES PRESTON FOUND APPEALING... AND I PLAYED THE PART DURING AN EXCITING ROUND OF DATES!

WINNIE WALCHELL JUST SPOTTED US FROM A CAB! DO YOU MIND BREAKING INTO HIS GOGGIP COLUMB, CAROL?

GOOD HEAVENS! BUT WE'RE JUST FRIENDS, PRESTON... AREN'T WE?

THAT WAS A QUESTION I BEGAN ASKING MYSELF... WHEN PRESTON PLACED ME IN CHARGE OF THE JEWELRY DEPARTMENT!

SURPRISED I DON'T YOU KNOW THAT DIAMONDS AND PEARLS ARE THE ONLY RIGHT SETTING FOR YOU, DARLING?

PRESTON... PLEASE DON'T! I'M DAZZLED ENOUGH AS IT IS!

HOW COULD I BE SURE I LOVED PRESTON... WHEN THERE WERE SO MANY THINGS ABOUT HIM I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND? THINGS LIKE THAT AFTERNOON AT THE RACE TRACK...

I'M AMAZED AT THE WAY THE BOOKIES CROWD AROUND YOU, DARLING... ESPECIALLY FOR THOSE LITTLE TWO DOLLAR BETS!

TWO DOLLARS! WHEN I SAY "BET TWO"... I MEAN TWO THOUSAND! YE GODS... IS EVERY HORSE I PICKED TODAY READY FOR THE GLUE FACTORY?

SOMEHOW IT DOESN'T SEEM RIGHT TO LOSE EIGHT THOUSAND DOLLARS IN A SINGLE DAY'S GAMBLING, PRESTON! GOOD HEAVENS... DO YOU REALIZE WHAT THAT MONEY WOULD MEAN TO SOME PEOPLE?

MAYBE IT WAS WASTEFUL... MONEY... BUT WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE... AS LONG AS I SPENT THE AFTERNOON WITH YOU?

I TRIED TO ANSWER AS THE CAR HALTED... AS HIS CLOTHES BRUSHED MY HAIR AND LIPS! BUT IN THAT PULSING MOMENT, NOTHING MADE ANY DIFFERENCE... NOTHING BUT PRESTON!

THEN... ONE EVENING A WEEK LATER... SHORTLY BEFORE CLOSING TIME...

I'VE GOT TO KEEP MY HEAD... BUT THOSE THREE \$10,000 NECKLACES ARE MISSING! SINCE THE SAFE WASN'T FORCED OPEN, WHAT CAN IT MEAN... WHEN THE ONLY TWO PEOPLE WHO KNOW THE COMBINATION ARE MARY... AND PRESTON?

"BREATHLESSLY... I RUSHED TO PRESTON'S PENTHOUSE OFFICE!"



PRESTON... THOSE NECKLACES! I... I DON'T KNOW HOW TO ASK YOU... BUT...

SURE... I TOOK THEM... BUT WHAT'S DISHONEST ABOUT THAT? IT'S IN THE FAMILY, ISN'T IT? CAROL, I'M \$30,000 IN THE HOLE... AND I HAVE REASONS FOR WANTING TO KEEP IN MY FATHER'S GOOD GRACES! IF THERE'S ONE THING HE DOESN'T LIKE... IT'S GAMBLING!

BUT STEALING'S WORSE, PRESTON! HOW DO YOU EXPECT TO COVER UP THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THREE VALUABLE NECKLACES?

I'M TAKING CARE OF THAT! YOU MAY NOT APPROVE OF THE METHOD, BABY... BUT I'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING DRASTIC TO GET OUT OF DEBT AND START AFRASH! MY FATHER'S ATTITUDE WILL MEAN A LOT TO BOTH OF US... BECAUSE WHEN HE GETS BACK FROM EUROPE, I WANT TO INTRODUCE YOU... AS HIS FUTURE DAUGHTER-IN-LAW!



"THEN... WHILE THE MEANING OF PRESTON'S WORDS STILL CLAMORED INSIDE ME..."



PRESTON... THAT'S SMOKE! THE STORE'S AFIRE!

GOOD LORD... IT COULDN'T HAVE HAPPENED... SO SOON!

"I HEARD THE HEARING WAIL OF SIRENS... THE FAR-OFF SCUFFLE OF FEET AS THE SALESGIRLS SCURRIED TO SAFETY!"

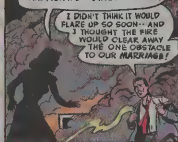
WE'RE TRAPPED, PRESTON... A HUNDRED FEET HIGHER THAN ANY FIRE LADDER CAN REACH!



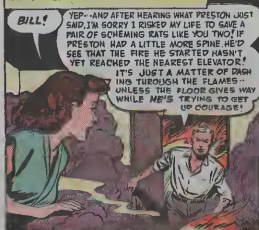
"WILD MYSTERY GRIPPED ME AS THE LIGHTS WENT OUT... AND THE PAINT STARTED TO PEEL ON THE SMOKING WALLS!"

"YOU DID THIS... SO THAT YOUR THEFTS WOULDN'T BE DISCOVERED! WELL, THEY WON'T BE DISCOVERED... AND NEITHER WILL OUR BODIES! ARE THEY WORTH \$30,000? ANSWER ME!"

I DIDN'T THINK IT WOULD FLARE UP SO SOON... AND I THOUGHT THE FIRE WOULD CLEAR AWAY THE ONE OBSTACLE TO OUR MARRIAGE!



"AT THAT INSTANT... I STARED UNBELIEVINGLY AT THE FIGURE THAT GROOPED THROUGH THE CRIMSON HAZE!"



BILL!

YEP... AND AFTER HEARING WHAT PRESTON JUST SAID, I'M SORRY I RISKED MY LIFE TO SAVE A PAIR OF SCHEMING RATS LIKE YOU TWO! IF PRESTON HAD A LITTLE MORE SPINE, HE'D SEE THAT THE FIRE HE STARTED HADN'T YET REACHED THE NEAREST ELEVATOR. IT'S JUST A MATTER OF DASHING THROUGH THE FLAMES... UNLESS THE FLOOR GIVES WAY WHILE HE'S TRYING TO GET UP COURAGE!

"GASPING IN THE FURNACE-HOT CORRIDOR... BARELY ABLE TO SEE IN THE FUMING SMOKE... WE STAGGERED TO THE ELEVATOR!"



GET IT STARTED! FOR THE LOVE OF PETE... HURRY!

TUT-TUT, CNUH... DON'T TURN YELLOW NOW! SOMEONE'S GOT TO HELP THE FUTURE MRS. STACY!

"WHEN...HALF-WAY DOWN THE FLAME-SWEPT SHAFT...THE ELEVATOR STOPPED!"

WE'RE RIGHT IN THE CENTER OF THE FIRE...THE CAR WALLS ARE GETTING HOTTER EVERY SECOND! WE WON'T BURN OR SUFFOCATE NOW...WE'LL ROAST!

CHEERFUL, HUH...RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF YOUR VERY OWN BLAZE! IF IT WEREN'T A CASE OF GETTING MYSELF OUT ALIVE...I'D LEAVE YOU HERE TO ENJOY IT!



"NEVER BEFORE HAD MINUTES PASSED SO SLOWLY... WITH THE ROARING FLAMES AND CRASHING WALLS TICKING OFF EACH TERRIBLE SECOND! SUDDENLY..."

LOOK...THERE'S A LIGHT GLEAMING BELOW THE SWITCH! HE'S DONE IT...THE POWER'S ON!

GREAT GUNS...THE CABLE'S TOO HOT TO HOLD! STACY...BRING THE CAR UP!



AS IT IS...THERE'S JUST ONE WAY TO GET THE ELEVATOR MOVING! I'M GOING UP THE CABLE...TO THE MOTOR ROOM!

NO, BILL... DON'T! BILL... COME BACK!



"AND THEN...I FACED SOMETHING FAR MORE TERRIFYING THAN THE STIFLING INFERNO...THE SMILE THAT TWISTED PRESTON'S GLISTENING FEATURES AS HE STARTED THE ELEVATOR!"

WHAT AN OPTIMIST HE IS!

PRESTON...YOU'RE TAKING THE CAR DOWN!



"IN A FLASH, I SAW THE KIND OF MAN PRESTON WAS...IN A FLASH, I RECKONED THE PRICE OF MY MISTAKE...THE LIFE OF THE MAN I REALLY LOVED!"

GO BACK...GO BACK! YOU HEARTLESS COWARD... YOU MURDERER!

NOT A CHANCE! BILL THOMPSON'S THE ONLY ONE WHO KNOWS HOW THE FIRE STARTED... BESIDES YOU! I DON'T THINK YOU'LL TALK... AND I'M MAKING SURE HE DOESN'T!



LET ME GO! I WON'T LEAVE HIM UP THERE... I WON'T!

GET A GRIP ON YOURSELF, YOU LITTLE FOOL! WE'LL BE NO BETTER OFF THAN HE IS...IF WE DON'T FIND THE DOOR SOON!



"UNEXPECTEDLY...A GRIMY FIGURE WHIZZED FROM THE PACKAGE CHUTE!"

THOMPSON! GREAT GUNS... AM I SEEING THINGS?



SO YOU TRIED TO KILL ME... AFTER I WAS CHUMP ENOUGH TO SAVE YOUR WORTHLESS HIDES! DISAPPOINTING, ISN'T IT... THAT I MANAGED TO JUMP DOWN THE STAIR WELL TO THE PACKAGE CHUTE ON THE TOP FLOOR? STACY, I'M GOING TO SHOW YOU WHAT IT **MEANS** TO BE TRAPPED... BECAUSE WHEN I'M THROUGH WITH YOU... **YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO MOVE!**

BILL... DON'T! BELIEVE ME, DARLING... I LOVE YOU... I TRIED TO STOP HIM!



DEERING, BILL THRUST ME ASIDE... RUSHING PRESTON WITH A FURY THAT MATCHED THE SOARING FLAMES!"

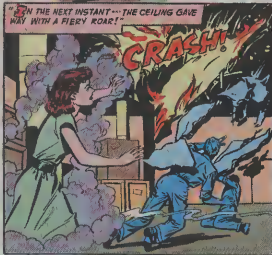
SURE... SHE'D SAY ANYTHING TO SAVE YOUR NECK... BUT I'M NOT LISTENING!

POW!



"IN THE NEXT INSTANT... THE CEILING GAVE WAY WITH A FIERY ROAR!"

CRASH!



BILL... BILL! OH, DARLING... YOU'VE GOT TO BE ALL RIGHT!

THERE THEY ARE! I'LL MANAGE THE HOSE, MIKE... GET A RESCUE SQUAD IN HERE!



"BILL WAS MERELY SHAKEN... BUT AS THE FIREMEN LIFTED PRESTON'S CRUMPLED BODY TO A STRETCHER..."

YOU'VE GOT NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT -- NOW THAT BILL'S ALIVE! I GUESSED I DIDN'T RATE FROM THE WAY YOU LOOKED AT ME WHEN I ADMITTED SETTING THE FIRE -- AND I WAS SURE OF IT WHEN YOU STRUGGLED WITH ME IN THE ELEVATOR -- TRYING TO SAVE BILL'S LIFE!

MAYBE IT DOES MATTER, CAROL! AFTER LISTENING TO PRESTON... I THINK I KNOW WHAT THE SCORE IS!

BILL, AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED, THERE WASN'T ANY SCORE... BECAUSE I WASN'T PLAYING FOR KEEPS!

OUTSIDE... WHILE A SECRET FLAME OF MY OWN GLOWED DEEP WITHIN ME...

LOOK, HONEY... I CAN'T HOPE THAT YOU'LL BELIEVE ME AFTER THE THINGS I SAID, AND THE THINGS I SUSPECTED... BUT I LOVE YOU!

DARLING, I DO BELIEVE YOU! IF YOU CAN LOVE ME NOW... WHEN I LOOK LIKE THIS... I KNOW YOU'VE LOVED ME ALL ALONG!

DON'T TRY TO TALK NOW, PRESTON... IT DOESN'T MATTER!



The END!

TOO BROADMINDED

OVER and over again, Shirley Browne kept telling herself that she mustn't—she simply *mustn't*—fall in love with her boss. But over and over again, her heart kept pulsing, "Too late . . . too late . . . you are . . . you are . . . !"

Yes, it was too late—because Allan Crowden was too handsome, too kind, too *wonderful* to be with! She had tried hard to resist his charms, had kept reminding herself that he was already engaged, that he would never be hers. But it was no use—and it was *LOVE!*

Of course, she'd never dared show her feelings, and not once had Allan made any advances—unless his constant kind thoughtfulness could be construed as meant especially for her. But Shirley reluctantly had to admit that he was that way with everyone, and that she was just another employee to him—although a very trusted one.

His fiancée had previously been Allan's confidential secretary, but since she'd become engaged to him, had left to go to Paris and shop for her trousseau—on *his* money. And ever since she'd left, Shirley had taken her place—and had become more and more invaluable to him in his work.

Shirley never minded working long hours for him, didn't even object when he asked her to come out to his home that weekend to help him work on some important papers. And it had been agony—pure torture—to be so close to him, so near that she could almost brush his face with her lips. Yes, it had been hard to restrain herself, hard to keep from shouting out her love—but she'd done it.

And now, when they were sitting close together on the verandah in the twilight, his hand casually touching

her shoulder as they both enjoyed a moment's relaxation from their work, Shirley knew how their positions would look to an outsider. She knew the impression would be that they were so intimate and so close that they didn't even need to embrace to show their affection—as if they'd been married for years. Oh, if only it were true, Shirley thought, if only—

"Well!" a voice called out from the semi-darkness. "How cozy!"

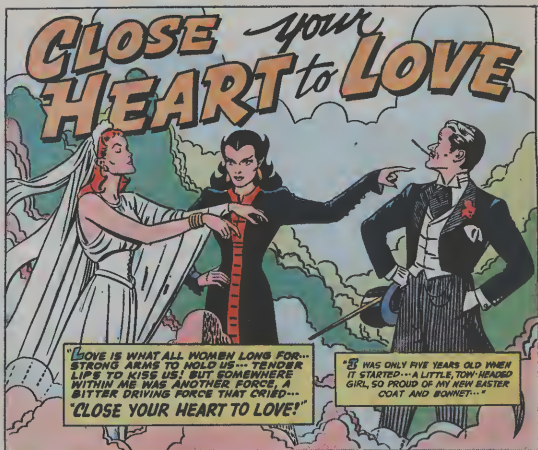
Allan leaped up. "*June!* I . . . I didn't know . . ."

Allan's fiancée materialized out of the twilight. "Now, now, Allan, you don't have to apologize for being caught making love to someone while I was gone. I'm broadminded enough to overlook your indiscretions!"

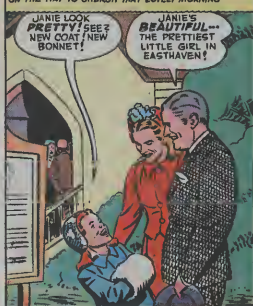
Even in the darkness, Shirley could see the cold fury gathering in Allan's face. "*Broadminded!*" he said angrily. "I don't want a wife whose mind is a nest of dirty suspicions—and who's too *broadminded* to take faithfulness seriously! If you don't care about me making love to others, it must mean that you hold love pretty cheaply! I'm beginning to see things now—that the only thing you value highly is money—my money! And that ever since you left and Shirley took your place, in your job and in my heart, I've been *hoping* for just such an excuse to break our engagement—and *this is it!* Thanks for opening my eyes to the *real* you, Miss Broadminded!"

Shirley marveled at the sudden transformation in Allan's face as he turned to her with an expression of love and tenderness. "Shirley, I love you! Will you . . . that is, do you . . .?"

Through tears of happiness, Shirley managed to say, "Yes, darling—I will and I do—*till death do us part!*"



"EVEN LITTLE GIRLS HAVE VANITY, AND I SUPPOSE I HAD MY SHARE, AS I PREENED AND ADMURED MYSELF ON THE WAY TO CHURCH THAT LOVELY MORNING..."



"I HEARD SOMEONE SAY, 'ISN'T SHE DARLING!' AND THOUGHT IT WAS MEANT FOR ME! BUT IT WASN'T! I REMEMBER THE PANGS OF JEALOUSY THAT SHOT THROUGH ME AS I SAW THIS OTHER LITTLE GIRL, WHO OUTSHONE ME..."



"THE HURTS OF CHILDHOOD GO VERY DEEP, SOMETIMES, AND I REMEMBER MINE WELL! I MUST HAVE BEEN ABOUT TEN YEARS OLD WHEN ALICIA BARD STRUCK AT ME AGAIN! IT WAS AFTER SCHOOL..."

...IT'S GOING TO BE A LOVELY PARTY! WE'RE HAVING ICE CREAM, CAKES AND A MAGICIAN!

MAYBE...MAYBE SHE'LL ASK ME, TOO!

"I DREW CLOSER, HOPING SHE WOULD SEE ME AND INCLUDE ME IN HER INVITATION! SHE DID SEE ME...AND I'LL NEVER FORGET THE SHOCK AND SHAME I FELT WHEN..."

OH, HERE'S JANE PERRY! WE DON'T WANT HER, DO WE? HER MOTHER HAS TO TAKE IN SEWING TO HELP HER FATHER! I HEARD MY DADDY SAY SO!

"I WANTED TO FIGHT BACK...BUT I COULDN'T! THERE WAS A LUMP IN MY THROAT THAT DISSOLVED INTO TEARS THE MOMENT I WAS ALONE! I HAD NO DEFENSES AS I SOBBED OUT MY HEART IN THE DESERTED SCHOOL YARD..."

STUCK UP... I HATE HER... I HATE HER...

"THROUGH PUBLIC SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL, I WAS ALWAYS AWARE OF HER, HATING HER, ENVYING HER...AND, AT THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART, WANTING SO MUCH TO BE LIKE HER! ABOUT A WEEK BEFORE THE SENIOR PROM, I CAUGHT AN UNEXPECTED GLIMPSE OF HER..."

SHE'S BUYING HER GOWN AT MADAME'S! OH, IT'S BEAUTIFUL... I'LL BET IT COSTS A LOT! BUT IT'S SO SMOOTH-LOOKING...

"I MEMORIZED EVERY DETAIL OF THAT DRESS AND BEGGED MOTHER TO MAKE ME ONE LIKE IT! FOR DAYS, MOTHER CUT AND BASTED AND STITCHED, BUT WHEN IT WAS FINISHED, I FELT...WELL...LET-DOWN!"

IT--IT'S NOT A VERY GOOD COPY, IS IT, MOTHER? I THINK IT'S SORT OF...GLEAZY...

I'M SORRY, DEAR, BUT WE CAN'T AFFORD BETTER MATERIAL...AND I HAD NO PATTERN TO GO BY!

"BY PROM NIGHT, I HAD FORGOTTEN MY DISAPPOINTMENT! EVEN IF MY DRESS WASN'T RIGHT, IT DID FEEL SO LUXURIOUS! AND MY ESCORT WAS SOMETHING TO BE PROUD OF...BILL HOBE...THE NICEST-LOOKING BOY AT EARTHAVEN HIGH!"

HEY, JANE, YOU LOOK KEEN!

"MAYBE EVERY GIRL FEELS LIKE A QUEEN ON HER PROM NIGHT! I KNOW I DID AS I DANCED WITH BILL, PITYING OTHER GIRLS WITH LESS ATTRACTIVE ESCORTS, FEELING A TRIUMPHANT SURGE ABOUT MINE! WE HAD JUST FINISHED A DANCE..."

HOW'S FOR SOME ICE-COLD PUNCH JANE? THIRSTY?

PLENTY! LET'S GO, BILL--YOU RUN INTERFERENCE FOR ME!



"THERE WAS A GANG OF KIDS AT THE TABLE! I DIDN'T NOTICE WHO THEY WERE UNTIL A SUDDEN SILENCE FELL AROUND ME--AND I LOOKED! ALICIA BARO WAS STARING AT ME, AT MY CHEAP, HOME-MADE IMITATION OF HER DRESS..."

WELL! I DIDN'T KNOW CARTER'S BARGAIN BASEMENT HAD A COPY OF MY DRESS! I COULD HAVE SAVED SOME MONEY!



"I CAN'T TELL YOU HOW I FELT! I WANTED TO DISAPPEAR... TO OIE! AT THE SAME TIME, I WANTED TO SHOUT MY HATREO--TO STRIKE BACK AT ALICIA BARO! BUT I DID NONE OF THESE THINGS... I JUST STOOD THERE-- FROZEN!"



"I DON'T REMEMBER HOW I GOT OUT OF THAT PLACE, BUT I FOUND MYSELF RUNNING AWAY-- TEARS BLINDING MY EYES, PULSES OF TORMENTING HATE POUNDING WITHIN ME!"



JANE, DARLING, OPEN THE DOOR! WHAT HAPPENED?

I'M--I'M ALL RIGHT, MOTHER! PLEASE, PLEASE LEAVE ME ALONE!



"I KNEW THAT NIGHT THAT ALICIA BARO HAD MADE ME CRY FOR THE LAST TIME! AND THAT NIGHT, I MADE THE RESOLUTION THAT SHAPED-- AND ALMOST DESTROYED-- MY ENTIRE LIFE!"

SHE'LL NEVER HAVE A CHANCE TO DO THIS TO ME AGAIN! FROM NOW ON, I'LL HAVE THE VICTORIES! I'LL MAKE HER FEEL ASHAMED AND NOT WANTED! I'LL MAKE HER CRY!



"TO BEAT ALICIA AT HER OWN GAME? THAT WAS THE DRIVING FORCE OF MY LIFE! TO DO IT, I TRAINED MYSELF, STUDIED, IMPROVED MY MIND, WORKED TO BECOME OUTSTANDING!"



THE BEST JOB OF NEWS REPORTING IN THIS CLASS HAS BEEN DONE BY MISS JANE PERRY! YOU'LL MAKE A FINE NEWSPAPER WOMAN, MISS PERRY!

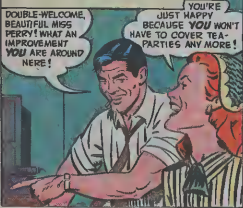
THANK YOU... I HOPE TO!

"I STUDIED MYSELF, TOO! CAREFULLY, I SELECTED COLORS, COSMETICS, A HAIR STYLE... EVERYTHING TO MAKE THE MOST OF THE LOOKS I ALREADY HAD..."



I'LL NEVER BE CONTENT UNTIL I'VE MADE HER KNOW AND FEEL WHAT SHE'S DONE TO ME!

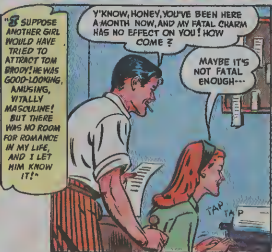
"I WAS NINETEEN THE DAY I GOT MY JOB ON THE EASTHAVEN NEWS! POISED, CONFIDENT, I KNEW I WOULD GET AHEAD -- FAR AHEAD! STAR REPORTER TOM BRODY SHOWED ME TO MY DESK..."



DOUBLE-WELCOME, BEAUTIFUL MISS PERRY! WHAT AN IMPROVEMENT YOU ARE AROUND HERE!

YOU'RE JUST HAPPY BECAUSE YOU WON'T HAVE TO COVER TEA-PARTIES ANY MORE!

"I SUPPOSE ANOTHER GIRL WOULD HAVE TRIED TO ATTRACT TOM BRODY! HE WAS GOOD-LOOKING, AMUSING, VITALLY MASCUINE! BUT THERE WAS NO ROOM FOR ROMANCE IN MY LIFE, AND I LET HIM KNOW IT!"



Y'KNOW, HONEY, YOU'VE BEEN HERE A MONTH NOW, AND MY FATAL CHARM HAS NO EFFECT ON YOU! HOW COME?

MAYBE IT'S NOT FATAL ENOUGH...

"I NEVER FINISHED THAT SENTENCE! THE GALLEY PROOF IN TOM'S HAND HAD CAUGHT MY EYE... AND AS I READ IT... I KNEW THAT MY FIRST CHANCE HAD COME!"



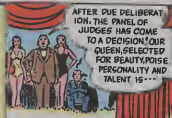
TOWNSMEN SEEK EASTHAVEN QUEEN. ALICIA BARD FAVORITE IN BEAUTY CONTEST

"TOM STARED AT ME, HIS EYES NARROWED SHREWDLY! I MUST HAVE BOUNDED DIFFERENT FROM MY USUAL SELF! MY VOICE WAS HARSH -- ANGRY..."



YOU CAN TEAR THAT STORY TO SHREDS, TOM! ALICIA BARD'S NOT GOING TO WIN THAT CONTEST... I AM!

"THE SEARCH FOR QUEEN OF EASTHAVEN. IT HAD NARROWED DOWN TO TWO CONTESTANTS... ALICIA BARD AND MYSELF! IN THE AUDIENCE WERE HER DREAMING FAMILY AND FRIENDS... SO SURE OF THEMSELVES!"



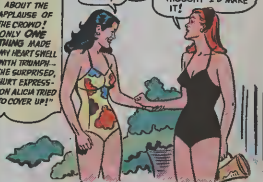
AFTER DUE DELIBERATION, THE PANEL OF JUDGES HAS COME TO A DECISION! OUR QUEEN, SELECTED FOR BEAUTY, POISE, PERSONALITY AND TALENT IS...



"HE SAID MY NAME! I DIDN'T CARE ABOUT THE APPLAUSE OF THE CROWD! ONLY ONE THING MADE MY HEART SWELL WITH TRIUMPH... THE SURPRISE, HURT EXPRESSION ALICIA TRIED TO COVER UP!"

CONGRATULATIONS, JANE! I'M GLAD THE BEST WOMAN WON!

YOU ARE? WELL, THANK YOU! I'LL BET YOU NEVER THOUGHT I'D MAKE IT!



"WHAT DID I WANT WITH HER HYPOCRITICAL CONGRATULATIONS? I HAD WON... FOR THE FIRST TIME, I HAD BEATEN HER! WHEN TOM SPOKE TO ME LATER, I SCARCELY HEARD HIM..."

A THOUSAND CONGRATULATIONS ON A THOUSAND CHARMS, BEAUTIFUL! BUT WEREN'T YOU A LITTLE ROUGH WITH THE LOSER?

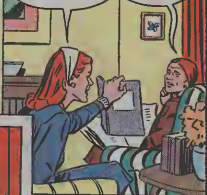
I KNOW WHAT I'M DOING, TOM... THIS IS MY AFFAIR!



"THAT WAS THE FIRST DENT I HAD PUT IN HER ARMOR! BUT THERE WAS ANOTHER BLOW COMING TO ALICIA BARD! THE COUNTRY CLUB'S ANNUAL MASQUERADE WAS NEXT ON MY LIST..."

MOTHER, I WANT YOU TO MAKE THIS COSTUME FOR ME! I'LL BUY THE BEST OF MATERIALS...

ISN'T IT A BIT... DARING, JANE? DON'T YOU THINK...



JANE PERRY, YOU... YOU'RE MAGNIFICENT! WHERE DID YOU GET THAT COSTUME?



"OF COURSE IT WAS DARING! IT WAS MEANT TO BE! THE NIGHT OF THE BALL, I WAITED OUTSIDE THE DOOR, REMEMBERING A SENIOR PROM, A SCHOOL AUDITORIUM, A CHEER, SHODDY DRESS..."

"I ENTERED THE ROOM! THE SUDDEN SILENCE WAS A TRIBUTE TO ME! I THREW ALICIA A FRANK LOOK, THAT SAID, 'YOU LOSE... AGAIN.'"

ALICIA, YOU'RE STUNNING!

YOU'RE SURE TO WIN!

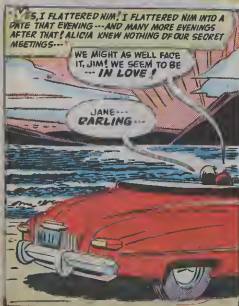
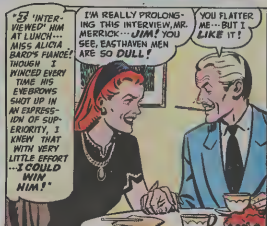
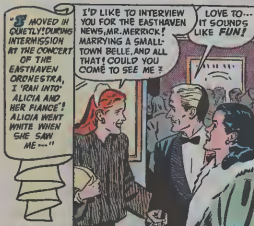
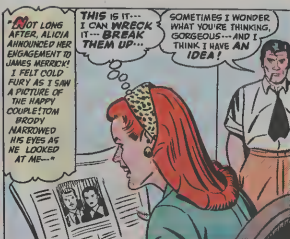
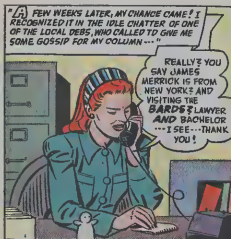


"I WAS BEGINNING TO ENJOY HER HUMILIATION AND MY VICTORY... JUST BEGINNING!"

THIS ISN'T THE END! I WANT TO MAKE HER CRY... AND I WILL!

OH... I MANAGED TO PICK IT UP IN CARTER'S BARGAIN BASEMENT!





"**S** TOLD HER! JIM WAS TOO COWARDLY AND BESIDES, I WANTED TO TELL HER! I SAW THE COLOR LEAVE HER FACE, HER EYES WIDEN WITH PAIN! AND I TWISTED THE KNIFE...DEEPER...DEEPER..."



I KNOW YOU'LL UNDERSTAND, ALICIA! YOU'VE ALWAYS HAD SO MUCH...I'VE HAD SO LITTLE!

I... I...

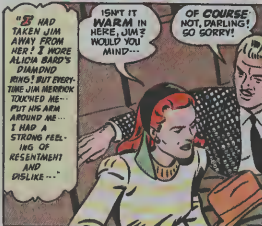
"**S**HE TRIED TO PULL HERSELF TOGETHER, BUT SHE MADE A BAD JOB OF IT...AND I WASN'T MAKING IT ANY EASIER FOR HER!"



I'M GLAD YOU'RE SUCH A GOOD LOSER!

EXCUSE ME...PLEASE... I MUST GO...

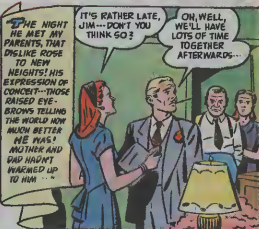
"**S** HAD TAKEN JIM AWAY FROM HER! I WORE ALICIA BARD'S DIAMOND RING! BUT EVERY TIME JIM MERRICK TOUCHED ME... PUT HIS ARM AROUND ME... I HAD A STRONG FEELING OF RESENTMENT AND DISLIKE..."



ISN'T IT WARM IN HERE, JIM? WOULD YOU MIND...

OF COURSE NOT, DARLING! SO SORRY!

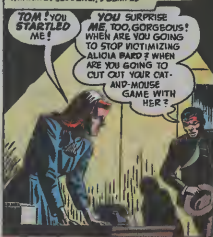
"**T**HE NIGHT HE MET MY PARENTS, THAT DISLIKE ROSE TO NEW HEIGHTS! HIS EXPRESSION OF CONDEMNATION--THOSE RAISED EYEBROWS TELLING THE WORLD HOW MUCH BETTER HE WAS! MOTHER AND DAD HADN'T WARNED UP TO HIM..."



IT'S RATHER LATE, JIM-- DON'T YOU THINK SO?

OH, WELL, WE'LL HAVE LOTS OF TIME TOGETHER AFTERWARDS...

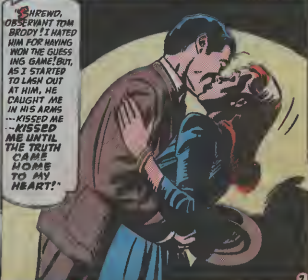
"**A**FTERWARDS! HE MEANT AFTER WE WERE MARRIED! ONLY MY TRIUMPH OVER ALICIA BARD SUSTAINED ME AS I SAT IN THE OFFICE LATE ONE EVENING... WONDERING-- THINKING! SUDDENLY, I JUMPED..."



TOM! YOU STARTLED ME!

YOU SURPRISE ME TOO, GORGEOUS! WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO STOP VICTIMIZING ALICIA BARD? WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO CUT OUT YOUR CAT-AND-MOUSE GAME WITH HER?

"**S**HREWD, OBSERVANT TOM BRODY! I HATED HIM FOR HAVING WON THE GUESSING GAME! BUT, AS I STARTED TO LASH OUT AT HIM, HE CAUGHT ME IN HIS ARMS... KISSED ME... KISSED ME UNTIL THE TRUTH CAME HOME TO MY HEART!"



"IT WAS WITH TOM'S TOUCH UPON ME, HIS KISS STILL WARM ON MY LIPS, THAT I WALKED DOWN THE AISLE TO MARRY JIM MERRICK! FOR I KNEW THAT IF I THOUGHT ABOUT IT---ALLOWED MYSELF TO THINK ABOUT IT---"



WHAT AM I DOING? I THOUGHT I WAS NURTURING HER... ALICIA BARD... BUT IT'S MYSELF I'M HURTING!

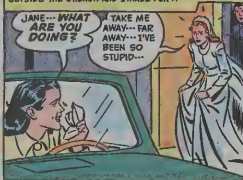
"I LOOKED AT MY BRIDE-GROOM'S FACE--THE FACE OF A STRANGER! I WAS FEARFUL--UNCERTAIN! THEN, HIS EYEBROWS SHOT UP IN THAT HATEFUL EXPRESSION AND I WANTED TO LAUGH--TO CRY--"



JANE! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

I MUSTN'T... I CAN'T...

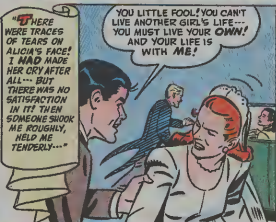
"THE GASPS OF THE WEDDING GUESTS FOLLOWED MY FLIGHT AS I TURNED AND RAN! THAT WAS MY ONE THOUGHT... TO GET AWAY! THERE WAS A CAR PARKED RIGHT OUTSIDE THE CHURCH AND I MADE FOR IT..."



JANE... WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

TAKE ME AWAY--- FAR AWAY--- I'VE BEEN SO STUPID...

"THERE WERE TRACES OF TEARS ON ALICIA'S FACE! I HAD MADE HER CRY AFTER ALL... BUT THERE WAS NO SATISFACTION IN IT! THEN SOMEONE SHOOK ME ROUGHLY, HELD ME TENDERLY..."



YOU LITTLE FOOL! YOU CAN'T LIVE ANOTHER GIRL'S LIFE... YOU MUST LIVE YOUR OWN! AND YOUR LIFE IS WITH ME!

"I COULD SEE JIM MERRICK, HALF ANGRY, HALF RELIEVED, WHISPERING TO ALICIA! THERE WAS A WASH SMILE ON HER FACE! THINGS WOULD BE ALL RIGHT FOR THEM... BUT FOR ME..."



DO YOU HEAR ME, JANE? REVENGE ISN'T ALWAYS SWEET, MY DARLING! AND A GRUDGE MAY BECOME A LIFE-LONG BURDEN!

TOM... TOM... WHAT CAN I SAY...?

"HE SMILED AT ME--- I DIDN'T HAVE TO SAY ANYTHING! FOR, IN MY FIGHT TO BE ANOTHER GIRL, I HAD FOUND MYSELF AND--- MY OWN TRUE LOVE!"



THE END!

BRIDE-TO-BE

SUE CARTER fingered the heavy white satin folds of the wedding dress longingly. This beautiful dress, so exactly what she herself would want to wear!

Her mind went off on a little adventure of its own. She, Sue Carter, in that wedding gown, walking slowly down the aisle toward Paul. And Paul, so handsome, waiting at the altar, with eyes for no one else in the world!

Her thoughts sped to Paul, to his lean, blonde good looks, his careless, casual way of talking and acting. No one really understood him. The town resented him out of jealousy, because he was a rich man's son. That's why they called him "spoiled," "wild," "bad!" They didn't know him as *she* did!

Yes, he drove too fast, in that speedy, hopped-up convertible! But that was just high-spirited energy, searching for an outlet. And if he gambled, whose business was it but his? He only gambled in order to be financially independent. As for his never holding a job, that was silly! Paul was too artistic to be tied down to some monotonous routine, behind a dusty old desk! And now he was dating *her*—even hinting of marriage!

"Will you help me?" The voice was impatient, as though the request had been made many times, vainly.

Sue apologized quickly as she turned to face the customer, a dark, beautiful girl, whose face was petulant and stormy. "What would you like to see?" she asked.

"A wedding gown! The best you have!" The girl's voice implied that the best was none too good for her.

Gown after gown was brought out for her inspection, but the dark girl

only smiled derisively. "Haven't you something more elegant?" she demanded. "More important-looking? Honestly, these hick towns!"

Reluctantly, Sue brought out the heavy . . . that heavy white satin gown with real lace forming delicate points at the wrists and the train studded with seed pearls. The girl looked at it greedily, obviously seeing herself in it, a dramatic, striking bride.

"Never mind the price," she snapped. "I'll take it!"

Sue's heart was heavy as she began to fold the lovely gown into layers and layers of tissue paper. Inwardly, she was bidding farewell to it . . . the wedding gown that symbolized her own dreams.

"I want it sent!" her customer ordered.

"Of course." Sue managed a polite smile. "To whom shall we send it, please?"

"To Miss Mary Banks, 343 Eutaw Road . . ." The girl stopped, hesitated, and smiled. There was something feline about her smile, a quality of secret amusement in it.

"No, change that," she amended. "I might as well have *him* pay for it, so I'll use my new name for the first time. Send and charge it to Mrs. Paul Taylor, Jr. The address is . . ."

"I know the address," Sue said, as she began to print it carefully in neat block letters. "Mr. Taylor is one of our leading citizens."

It was the funniest thing, really it was! Seeing this girl and thinking of Paul. How easy it had become, suddenly, to say goodbye to the wedding gown . . . and the cowardly, evasive weakling she had thought she loved!

For the first time in months, Sue was happy!

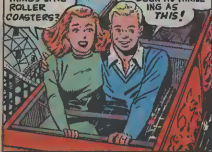
BEWITCHING BUCCANEER



ANY AMUSEMENT PARK IN ANY CITY, U.S.A. ...

GOSH, ISN'T THIS EXCITING?AREN'T YOU GLAD WE'RE LIVING NOW, RATHER THAN CENTURIES AGO --- WHEN THEY NEVER EVEN DREAMED OF THINGS LIKE ROLLER COASTERS?

YOU BET I'M GLAD, HONEY! LIFE IN THE OLDEN DAYS MUST HAVE BEEN ALL CUT AND DRIED, ALL MONOTONY --- IT COULDN'T HAVE BEEN AS THRILLING AS THIS!

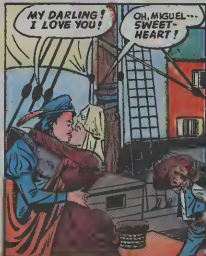


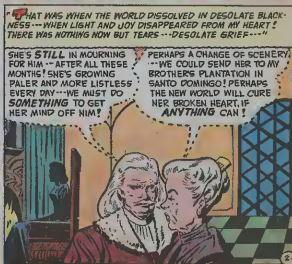
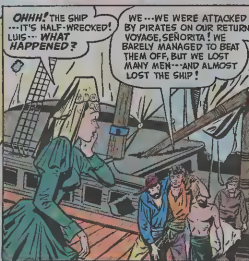
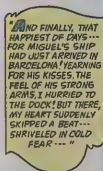
OH, YEAH? WELL, IF YOU SHARE THAT ALL-TOO-COMMON OPINION ABOUT THE SLOWNESS OF THE OLD DAYS, READER, LET'S JUST STRIP AWAY A COUPLE OF CENTURIES AND LOOK IN ON A LOVE AFFAIR THAT'S STILL BEING WHISPERED ABOUT IN BARCELONA, SPAIN --- AFTER MORE THAN 200 YEARS!



MY DARLING! I LOVE YOU!

OH, MIGUEL --- SWEET-HEART!





"I MADE NO OBJECTION WHEN MY PARENTS ARRANGED FOR MY TRIP INTO THE CARIBBEAN... WHY SHOULD I CARE WHAT I DID OR WHERE I WENT, WHEN LIFE HAD LOST ALL MEANING?"

HE... HE MIGHT BE LYING RIGHT BENEATH MY FEET! OH IF ONLY I COULD HAVE DIED WITH HIM!

SAIL, NO!

THE LOOKOUT'S SHOUT AROUSED ME FROM MY THOUGHTS! IDLY I PICKED UP A SPYGLASS TO SEE WHAT SHIP HAD BROKEN THE MONOTONY OF THE ENDLESS HORIZON...

OH!! THAT... THAT SKULL-AND-CROSSBONES FLAG! IT'S A PIRATE!

"I IRATES... THE ACCURSED TERRORS OF THE SPANISH MAIN! HORROR-STRICKEN I WATCHED OUR FUTILE FIGHT... SAW THE GRAPPLING IRONS LOCK US FAST! AND THEN... AS IF OUT OF SOME AWFUL NIGHTMARE..."

KILL THEM! DON'T LEAVE A BLOODY SOUL ALIVE!

LESSLY OUTNUMBERED, OUR CREW SOON SURRENDERED... AND THEN THE HORROR REALLY BEGAN!

WE'LL HAVE OUR FUN NOW, BOYS! ONE BY ONE... THEY'LL WALK THE PLANK!

HEAVEN HELP US...

"ONE BY ONE, WE WERE FORCED TO MAKE THAT LAST TERRIBLE STEP INTO THE BRINY DEEP! FINALLY, IT WAS MY TURN! I STEELED MYSELF TO SHOW NO COWARDICE... TO BEG NO MERCY FROM THESE INHUMAN BEASTS!"

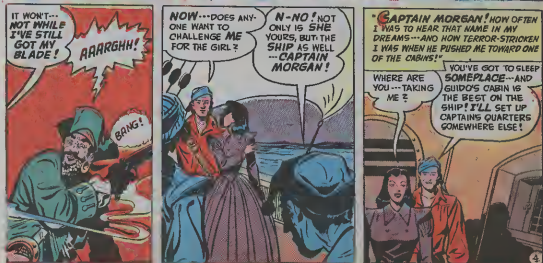
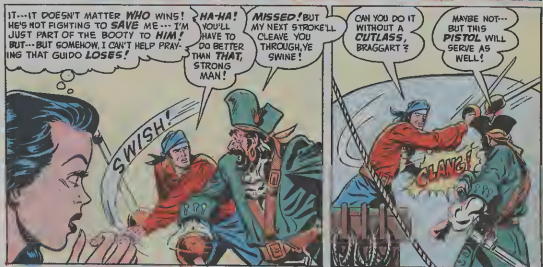
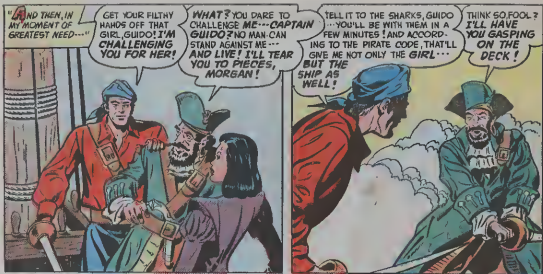
IT... IT WILL ALL BE OVER IN A MOMENT, ANYWAY... AND AT LEAST I'LL BE SHARING MY WATERY GRAVE WITH THE MAN I LOVE!

WHAT THE...! A WOMAN... AND A BEAUTIFUL ONE!

"SUDDENLY, I FELT MYSELF BEING ROUGHLY PULLED FROM THE PLANK, BACK ONTO THE DECK... ONLY TO COME FACE TO FACE WITH A FATE WORSE THAN THE DEATH I HAD JUST ESCAPED!"

YOU'RE TOO PRETTY TO DIE, SWEETHEART!

LET ME GO... HELP!



"**HE** STARED AT HIM IN AMAZE-
MENT---CONFUSED, DIS-
TURBED BY THE STRANGE WARMTH OF HIS SMILE, BY TENDER-
LY GENTLE EYES THAT SET MY HEART TO THROBBING!"

SLEEP WELL...
AND HAPPY
DREAMS!

WHAT--- WHAT KIND OF A
MAN IS HE? DID HE REALLY
SAVE ME OUT OF SOME SENSE
OF DECENCY AND KINDNESS? I---
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! HE'S JUST
A BLOODY PIRATE! FOR ALL I
KNOW, IT WAS HE WHO KILLED
MIGUEL--- THE ONLY MAN
I COULD EVER LOVE!

"BUT SLOWLY,
AS THE DAYS
GLIDED BY,
MY FEARS OF
CAPTAIN CEDRIC
MORGAN WEAK-
ENED, FINALLY
DISAPPEARED!
HE WAS CON-
SIDERATE AND
THOUGHTFUL
ABOUT MY EVERY
NEED, AND HE
IMPOSED AN
IRON DIS-
CIPLINE UPON
THE CREW THAT
MADE ME FEEL
SAFE EVEN
AMONG
THEM!"

THERE SHE GOES
---OUR BAD
LUCK SIGN!
WE HAVEN'T
TAKEN A SINGLE
SHIP SINCE
SHE'S BEEN
ABOARD!

SHH! YOU KNOW THE
CAPTAIN'S ORDERS
ABOUT NOT INSULTING
HER!

"LITTLE BY LITTLE, I FOUND MYSELF INTRIGUED BY
THIS MAN WHO HAD THE HEART OF A GENTLEMAN---
IN THE BODY OF A SWASHBUCKLING BUCCANEER! AND
ONE NIGHT, I LEARNED HOW MUCH INTRIGUED I WAS!"

YOU'RE ---
LOVELY!

I --- WANT TO HEAR
YOU SAY IT--- AGAIN---

"DISTURBED BY THE DREAM THAT HAD SHOCKED ME INTO
AWAKENING, I WANDERED OUT ON DECK IN THE COOL,
MISTY DAWN, AND THERE ---"

YOU! I--- I COULDN'T
SLEEP, SO I THOUGHT
I'D---

YOU NEEDN'T TRY TO
EXPLAIN--- I THINK I
UNDERSTAND! YOU SEE,
I COULDN'T SLEEP,
EITHER! MY HEART HASN'T
GIVEN ME A MOMENT'S
PEACE SINCE I FIRST SAW
YOU! I DIDN'T FIGHT GUIDO
FOR THE SHIP, BUT FOR
YOU---

--- FOR THE
GIRL I
LOVE!

MY ---
DARLING---

I--- SHOULDN'T CARE
FOR YOU LIKE THIS, BUT I
--- I CAN'T HELP
MYSELF!

SHIP HO! SAILS
TO THE WIND---
IT'S A SPANISH
FRIGATE!

"THIS WAS INSANE --- I, JUANITA DEL SARTO, NOBLE-
WOMAN --- IN THE BLOODSTAINED ARMS OF A COMMON
PIRATE! I WANTED TO CRY OUT, BREAK AWAY--- BUT
I COULDN'T! FOR HIS LIPS WERE ON MINE, KINDLING
ME TO AN ECSTASY SUCH AS I'VE NEVER KNOWN! WILDLY I
SURRENDERED MYSELF TO HIS EMBRACE --- TO LOVE!"



"A SPANISH MAN-OF-WAR! GLADNESS SURGED THROUGH MY HEART AS I REALIZED I WOULD SOON BE AMONG MY COUNTRYMEN... I WOULD SEE MY HOME, MY FAMILY! BUT SUDDENLY I THOUGHT OF CEDRIC... WHAT OF CEDRIC?"

"SHE'S TOO BIG FOR US... TOO MANY GUNS... WE'LL HAVE TO MAKE A RUN FOR IT!"

"NO! ARE WE TO FIGHT LIKE MEN... OR RUN LIKE COWARDS? MAN THE GUNS!"

"NO, CEDRIC, NO! LISTEN TO ME... GIVE YOURSELF UP! MY FAMILY HAS INFLUENCE... THEY'LL SECURE YOUR PARDON FROM THE KING... AND WE CAN BE HAPPY..."

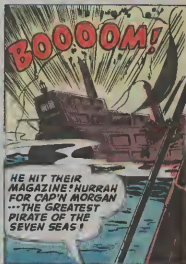
"GET BELOW DECKS! ...TO YOUR BATTLE STATIONS, COMRADES!"

"AYE, AYE, CAP'N! BUT WHAT YOU MEAN IS... TO OUR DEATHS!"

"HEARTSICK, I WATCHED THE CARNAGE THAT FOLLOWED! THE FRIGATE'S HEAVIER GUNS RAKED US IN BROADSIDE AFTER BROADSIDE, WREAKING TERRIBLE HAVOC!"

"IT'S SUICIDE TO STAY AT THESE GUNS! LOWER THE COLORS... SHOW THEM WE SURRENDER!"

"COWARDS! I'LL SHOW YOU HOW TO FIRE THAT CANNON!"



"BOOOOM!"
HE HIT THEIR MAGAZINE! HURRAH FOR CAP'N MORGAN... THE GREATEST PIRATE OF THE SEVEN SEAS!

"THE SHOT THAT SHATTERED MY COUNTRY'S SHIP ALSO DESTROYED MY LOVE... AND EXPLODED IN MY HEART WITH FLAMING FURY!"

"THAT SHE GOES... STRAIGHT TO THE BOTTOM O' THE SEA!"

"YOU... YOU MURDERING BRIGAND! I THOUGHT YOU WERE HUMAN, DECENT... I FELL IN LOVE WITH YOUR KINDNESS AND TENDERNESS... BUT NOW I SEE YOU FOR WHAT YOU REALLY ARE... THE BLOODIEST, CRUELIEST PIRATE THAT EVER LIVED! I HATE YOU... AND I HATE MYSELF FOR EVEN THINKING OF LOVING YOU!"

"SO THAT'S WHAT YOU THINK OF ME, EH? I WON'T FORGET IT... I WAS A FOOL FOR EVER THINKING YOU WERE ANYTHING BUT A WHIMPERING WEAKLING! NOW THAT I KNOW YOU FOR WHAT YOU ARE... I DESPISE YOU!"

"FOR THE REST OF THE VOYAGE, I STAYED IN MY CABIN, WEeping MY HEART OUT! BUT THEN, WHEN WE TIED UP AT THE ISLAND OF TORTUGA, KNOWN AS THE PIRATE REPUBLIC..."

"WHERE... WHERE ARE YOU TAKING ME? LET ME GO!"

"YOU'RE COMING ASHORE WITH ME! THE CREW KNOWS I HATE YOU NOW AS MUCH AS THEY DO, AND THEY'D SLIT YOUR THROAT IF I LEFT YOU ABOARD ALONE! THESE MANACLES WILL MAKE SURE YOU DON'T ESCAPE ME WHILE WE'RE ASHORE!"



"...ANAKLED LIKE A SLAVE. I WAS DRAGGED TO A PIRATE TAVERN! A VAST MELEE OF RAUCOUS LAUGHTER AND SHOUTING HIT MY EARS AS CEDRIC FLUNG OPEN THE DOOR...AND THEN A SUDDEN SILENCE FELL AS ALL EYES FOCUSED ON ME!"

WHAT'S THE MATTER...
HAVE ALL YOU LADS
LOST YOUR TONGUES?
HAVEN'T YOU EVER SEEN
A WOMAN
BEFORE?

AVAST, THERE! THEY'VE SEEN
ME! ANNE BONNY... THE
GREATEST WOMAN PIRATE
WHO EVER
LIVED...



...BUT THEY NEVER
EXPECTED TO SEE A
FANCY MILKSOP LIKE
THIS IN THE PIRATE
REPUBLIC!



HANDS OFF, ANNE!
SHE'S MY PROPERTY!



YE DARE LAY HANDS ON ANNE
BONNY, YE SNIVELIN' WHARF-RAT?
I'VE KILLED BETTER PIRATES THAN
YE'LL EVER BE, AND NOW IT'S
YOUR TURN!



THINK GO?
LET'S SEE
YOU TRY IT,
ANNIE!

"THIS WAS MY CHANCE TO ESCAPE...BUT I
STOOD ROOTED TO THE SPOT, WATCHING
IN FASCINATION AS CEDRIC DEFTLY LOCKED
OUTLASSES WITH ANNE, EFFORTLESSLY FORCED
HER ARM BACK!"

YE'VE GOT A STRONG
WRIST, BLAST YE!

SURE...AND THAT
OUTLASS IS TOO
HEAVY FOR A
LITTLE GIRL
LIKE YOU!



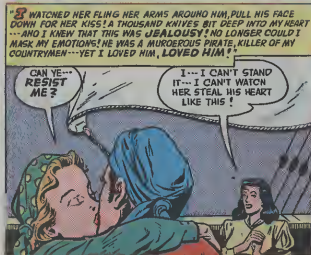
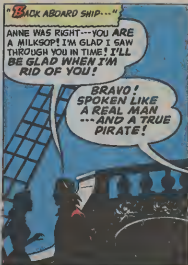
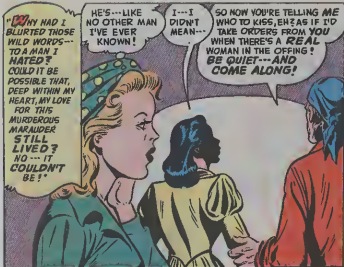
YOU'RE USING THE WRONG
ARMS SWEETHEART!
HOW'S ABOUT TRYING
MINE?



"I SAW HIM SWEEP HER INTO HIS ARMS,
PRESS HIS LIPS TO HERS...AND THE
SIGHT SENT A PANG OF UNBEARABLE
ANGUISH THROUGH MY HEART! I HEARD
MYSELF CRYING OUT..."



NO, CEDRIC
...DON'T!
DON'T
KISS
HER!





I'LL SCRATCH YOUR EYES OUT! I'LL TEAR YOUR HEART TO SHREDS AND FEED YOU TO THE SHARKS!

YOU VILE, CONTEMPTIBLE WITCH! I'LL NEVER LET YOU GET YOUR DIRTY CLAWS INTO HIM!



LET GO OF HER, ANNE! IF YOU'VE HARMED ONE HAIR OF HER HEAD, I'LL...

OH!!!!

FOR A MOMENT, MY HEART LEAPED WITH JOY AT HIS WORDS... DID HE REALLY CARE FOR ME? BUT THEN, THE OLD BITTER DESPAIR SURGED BACK TO REMIND ME THAT HE MERELY CONSIDERED ME HIS PROPERTY... DIDN'T WANT HIS VALUABLE BOOTY DAMAGED UNTIL RANSOM MONEY WAS HIS! AND THEN...

I'LL KILL HER... I SWEAR IT! I'LL HAVE HER HEART OUT IF IT'S THE LAST THING I DO!

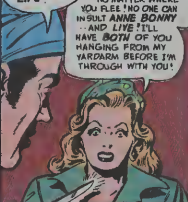


THAT WOULD BE THE LAST THING YOU DID, ANNE! YOU'VE TRIED MY PATIENCE ENOUGH... NOW GET OFF MY SHIP WHILE YOU'RE STILL ALIVE!



I MEAN IT, ANNE... GET OFF AND STAY OUT OF MY LIFE!

I'LL GO... BUT WE'LL MEET AGAIN! YOU WON'T ESCAPE MY VENGEANCE... NO MATTER WHERE YOU FLEE! NO ONE CAN INSULT ANNE BONNY... AND LIVE! I'LL HAVE BOTH OF YOU HANGING FROM MY YARDARM BEFORE I'M THROUGH WITH YOU!



"THEN, AS SOON AS ANNE HAD LEFT..."

SHE'S GOT MORE MEN THAN WE HAVE... AND THEY'LL BE COMING AFTER US! WE'LL HAVE TO LEAVE PORT... AND FAST!

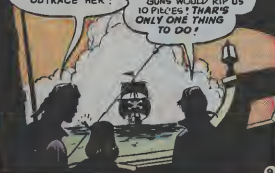
AYE, AYE, CAP'N!

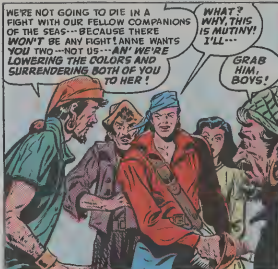


"BUT CEDRIC'S BATTERED SHIP WITH ITS BATTLE-TATTERED GAILS, COULDN'T PICK UP MUCH SPEED ON THE OPEN SEAS! AND SOON..."

IT'S ANNE BONNY'S SHIP! SHE'S CLOSING IN ON US... AND WE CAN'T OUTPACE HER!

AYE, AN' EVEN IF WE WANTED TO FIGHT AG'INST OUR FELLOW PIRATES, HER HEAVIER GUNS WOULD RIP US TO PIECES! THAT'S ONLY ONE THING TO DO!

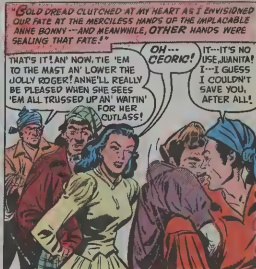




WE'RE NOT GOING TO DIE IN A FIGHT WITH OUR FELLOW COMPANIONS OF THE SEAS--BECAUSE THERE WON'T BE ANY FIGHT! ANNE WANTS YOU TWO--NOT US--! AN' WE'RE LOWERING THE COLORS AND SURRENDERING BOTH OF YOU TO HER!

WHAT? WHY, THIS IS MUTINY! I'LL...

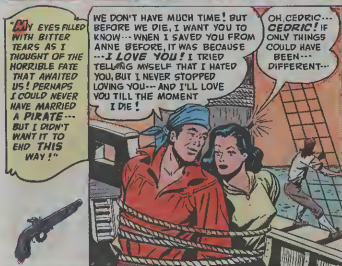
GRAB HIM, BOYS!



THAT'S IT! AN' NOW, TIE 'EM TO THE MAST AN' LOWER THE JOLLY ROGER! ANNE'LL REALLY BE PLEASED WHEN SHE SEES 'EM ALL TRUSS'D UP AN' WAITIN' FOR HER CUTLASS!

OH... CEDRIC!

IT--IT'S NO USE, JUANITA! I--I GUESS I COULDN'T SAVE YOU, AFTER ALL!



"MY EYES FILLED WITH BITTER TEARS AS I THOUGHT OF THE HORRIBLE FATE THAT AWAITED US! PERHAPS I COULD NEVER HAVE MARRIED A PIRATE... BUT I DIDN'T WANT IT TO END THIS WAY!"

WE DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME! BUT BEFORE WE DIE, I WANT YOU TO KNOW... WHEN I SAVED YOU FROM ANNE BEFORE, IT WAS BECAUSE... I LOVE YOU! I TRIED TELLING MYSELF THAT I HATED YOU, BUT I NEVER STOPPED LOVING YOU-- AND I'LL LOVE YOU TILL THE MOMENT I DIE!

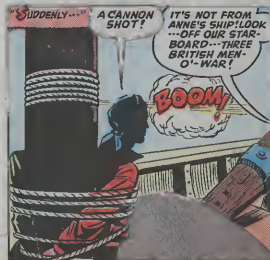
OH, CEDRIC... CEDRIC! IF ONLY THINGS COULD HAVE BEEN... DIFFERENT...



"HIS EYES LOOKED DEEPLY, LOVINGLY INTO MINE! SLOWLY WE STRAINED TOWARD EACH OTHER--UNTIL AT LAST OUR LIPS MET! YES, THIS WOULD BE OUR LAST KISS--MONUMENT TO A LOVE THAT COULD NEVER BE!"

DARLING...

IT'S... GOODBYE, CEDRIC!

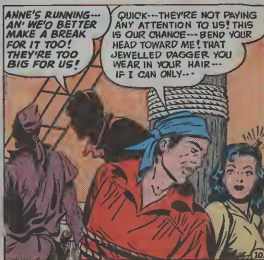


"SUDDENLY..."

A CANNON SHOT!

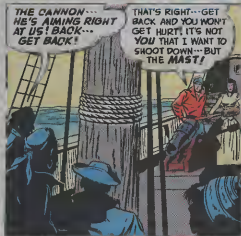
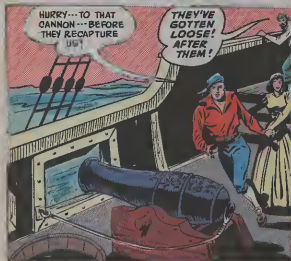
IT'S NOT FROM ANNE'S SHIP! LOOK--OFF OUR STARBOARD--THREE BRITISH MENO--WAR!

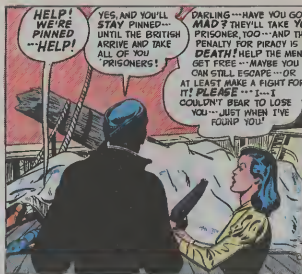
BOOM!



ANNE'S RUNNING-- AN' WE'D BETTER MAKE A BREAK FOR IT TOO! THEY'RE TOO BIG FOR US!

QUICK--THEY'RE NOT PAYING ANY ATTENTION TO US! THIS IS OUR CHANCE--BEND YOUR HEAD TOWARD ME! THAT JEWELLED DAGGER YOU WEAR IN YOUR HAIR-- IF I CAN ONLY--

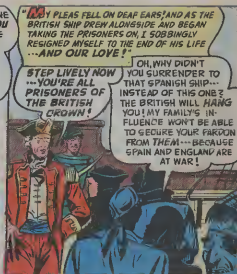




HELP!
WE'RE
PINNED
---HELP!

YES, AND YOU'LL
STAY PINNED---
UNTIL THE BRITISH
ARRIVE AND TAKE
ALL OF YOU
PRISONERS!

DARLING---HAVE YOU GONE
MAD? THEY'LL TAKE YOU
PRISONER, TOO---AND THE
PENALTY FOR PIRACY IS
DEATH! HELP THE MEN
GET FREE---MAYBE YOU
CAN STILL ESCAPE---OR
AT LEAST MAKE A FIGHT FOR
IT! PLEASE---I---I
COULDN'T BEAR TO LOSE
YOU---JUST WHEN I'VE
FOUND YOU!



"MY PLEASES FELL ON DEAF EARS, AND AS THE
BRITISH SHIP DREW ALONGSIDE AND BEGAN
TAKING THE PRISONERS ON, I SOBBINGLY
REIGNED MYSELF TO THE END OF HIS LIFE
---AND OUR LOVE!"

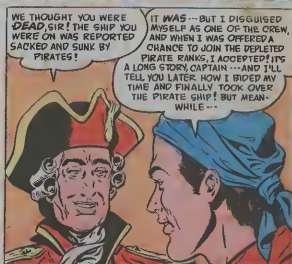
STEP LIVELY NOW
---YOU'RE ALL
PRISONERS OF
THE BRITISH
CROWN!

OH, WHY DIDN'T
YOU SURRENDER TO
THAT SPANISH SHIP---
INSTEAD OF THIS ONE? THE
BRITISH WILL HANG
YOU! MY FAMILY'S IN-
FLUENCE WON'T BE ABLE
TO SECURE YOUR PARDON
FROM THEM---BECAUSE
SPAIN AND ENGLAND ARE
AT WAR!



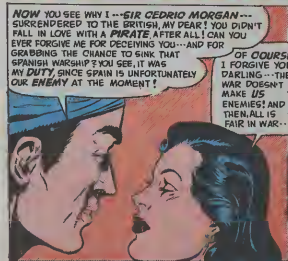
HURRY ALONG,
YOU---HUH?
WHY, IT---IT'S
COMMANDER
MORGAN!

COMMANDER---?
BUT---



WE THOUGHT YOU WERE
DEAD, SIR! THE SHIP YOU
WERE ON WAS REPORTED
SACKED AND SUNK BY
PIRATES!

IT WAS---BUT I DISGUISED
MYSELF AS ONE OF THE CREW,
AND WHEN I WAS OFFERED A
CHANCE TO JOIN THE DEPLETED
PIRATE RANKS, I ACCEPTED! IT'S
A LONG STORY, CAPTAIN---AND I'LL
TELL YOU LATER. HOW I BIDED MY
TIME AND FINALLY TOOK OVER
THE PIRATE SHIP! BUT MEAN-
WHILE---



NOW YOU SEE WHY I---SIR CEDRIO MORGAN---
SURRENDERED TO THE BRITISH, MY DEAR! YOU DIDN'T
FALL IN LOVE WITH A PIRATE, AFTER ALL! CAN YOU
EVER FORGIVE ME FOR DECEIVING YOU---AND FOR
GRABBING THE CHANCE TO SINK THAT
SPANISH WARSHIP? YOU SEE, IT WAS
MY DUTY, SINCE SPAIN IS UNFORTUNATELY
OUR ENEMY AT THE MOMENT!

OF COURSE,
I FORGIVE YOU,
DARLING---THE
WAR DOESN'T
MAKE US
ENEMIES! AND
THEN, ALL IS
FAIR IN WAR---



---AND
LOVE!

MY
DEAREST
ONE!

THERE, READER---NOW WILL YOU ADMIT THAT THE
PAST WASN'T AS BORING AND UNEXCITING AS YOU'D
THOUGHT? BUT DON'T ENVY THE THROBBING THRILL
OF THE OLDEN DAYS---FOR IN EVERY AGE, IN EVERY
LAND, EVERYONE CAN EXPERIENCE THAT GREATEST
ADVENTURE OF ALL---LOVE! YES, READER, NO MATTER
WHERE OR WHEN YOU LIVE, TRUE LOVE CAN SEEK
YOU OUT!

TALK - SING - PLAY

THROUGH YOUR OWN RADIO

With the *Super* HOME RADIO
MIKE!



**Fool Your
Friends —
Give Your Own
Radio Shows**

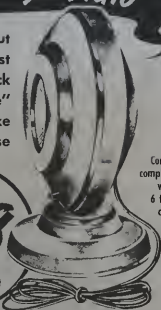
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complete
with
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cord

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- ☐ I'm enclosing \$2 send postpaid.

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Our famous, sure-fit, "hug-a-hug-a" waistline. 12 rows of elastic keep you waist tiny, make your full skirt billow out. Scrag neckline, puff sleeves with ties. Fits and feels so good! **COLORS:** Purple, Grey, Blue. **SIZES:** 12, 14, 16, 18, 20. Guaranteed washable. **only 1.88**
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Sensational higher-priced style "hug" in fashion's favorite polka dots, with full, 4-4-4 yard swirling skirt. Accented trimmed white pique top. Terrific value for you! **COLORS:** Navy, Green, Red. **SIZES:** 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 31, 33, 35, 37, 39, 41, 43, 45, 47, 49, 51, 53, 55, 57, 59, 61, 63, 65, 67, 69, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, 83, 85, 87, 89, 91, 93, 95, 97, 99, 101, 103, 105, 107, 109, 111, 113, 115, 117, 119, 121, 123, 125, 127, 129, 131, 133, 135, 137, 139, 141, 143, 145, 147, 149, 151, 153, 155, 157, 159, 161, 163, 165, 167, 169, 171, 173, 175, 177, 179, 181, 183, 185, 187, 189, 191, 193, 195, 197, 199, 201, 203, 205, 207, 209, 211, 213, 215, 217, 219, 221, 223, 225, 227, 229, 231, 233, 235, 237, 239, 241, 243, 245, 247, 249, 251, 253, 255, 257, 259, 261, 263, 265, 267, 269, 271, 273, 275, 277, 279, 281, 283, 285, 287, 289, 291, 293, 295, 297, 299, 301, 303, 305, 307, 309, 311, 313, 315, 317, 319, 321, 323, 325, 327, 329, 331, 333, 335, 337, 339, 341, 343, 345, 347, 349, 351, 353, 355, 357, 359, 361, 363, 365, 367, 369, 371, 373, 375, 377, 379, 381, 383, 385, 387, 389, 391, 393, 395, 397, 399, 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ROMANTIC ADVENTURES

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MAY 1950

COVER **BALD**THE FARMER'S DAUGHTER **BALD** 12

THE GIRL NOBODY WANTED WHITNEY & 12

CLOSE YOUR HEART TO LOVE GERSHWIN 8

BEWITCHING BUCCANEER SULTAN & 12